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9 Arts & Entertainment

UFOs in
Tinseltown

12 Gardener's Corner

From garden
to plate

20 Sports

UEFA Cup
roundup

INDEX

Arts & Entertainment9
Business13
Family Matters11
Movies, TV, Crossword19
Opinion10
Sports20

Gov't moves to stop PA census in Jerusalem

By ELLI WOLFGELERTER
and LIAT COLLINS

The government is hoping to pass special legislation this morning to prevent the Palestinian Authority from conducting its census in eastern Jerusalem, which begins today throughout the territories under the PA's control.

Coalition whip Meir Sheetrit told the Labor faction last night that it would be difficult for it to oppose the bill and that the coalition is mobilizing in force for the vote.

talks on the permanent arrangements, rather than try to create facts on the ground regarding sovereignty.

Jerusalem Arabs split on census, Page 2

"Recently the tension in Jerusalem has been constantly increasing, and it is our duty as Jerusalemite public officials who want the best for the city to ease the tension and not aggravate it,"

Pines wrote. "It would be best for all of us if we focussed on developing and building the city for the benefit of all its residents instead of dealing with disputes and arguments which contribute nothing to Jerusalem and its standing."

the sovereign state of Israel, a foreign body is trying to undermine our sovereignty," Netanyahu said. "This is a gross violation of an agreement, and I have asked Minister Kahalani to thwart the attempts by the Palestinians to carry out the census in Jerusalem."

Some 4,500 field workers today will begin collecting the 500,000 copies of the 78-question census which were mailed last month, according to Hassan Abu Libdeh, director of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

that the PA had the right to do so. Throughout the West Bank and Gaza yesterday, a census campaign was kicked off with marches to raise public awareness. In Hebron, some 1,000 census takers, boy scouts, and the mayor walked through the streets carrying banners declaring, "The census is the way to build our state." Volunteers distributed posters, bumper stickers and baseball caps with slogans such as "Another step toward the building of independent Palestine" and "Contribute to the success of the '97 census."

Mordechai pushes arms sales in Turkey

By ARNOLD O'SULLIVAN

ANKARA—Israel is serving as a comfortable alternative for transferring advanced weapons and military know-how which the US has been reluctant to give to Turkey due to its alleged abuse of human rights.

"This historic visit has achieved its goal: to widen the base of cooperation with the Turks," Mordechai said. "I certainly describe the relationship between us and the Turks as the development of a strategic relationship. All this is with the backing and coordination of the US."

One of the reasons Turkey is so supportive of the strategic alliance is its belief that the road to Washington goes through Jerusalem. Israeli defense officials said that in meetings at the Pentagon, they act as Turkey's "advocate" in its quest for arms.

Turkey's human-rights record, however, has been criticized and has led Washington to require it to receive preapproval for all military orders it places with US arms suppliers. This has resulted in the cancellation of several orders after Congress denied approval on human-rights grounds.

"Israel to this day has had a policy of not intervening in any internal matters of any country in the world. We don't like it when others interfere in our internal matters. For this reason, our policy doesn't touch on such matters [as human rights]."

Israeli defense officials said that the US had helped set up large industrial bases in Turkey for the production or assembly of fighter planes and armored vehicles.

See TURKEY, Page 2



A resident of Tel Aviv's Hatikva quarter takes the air yesterday while trying to avoid it.

(Alan Ossendryver/Israel Sun)

Tel Aviv reels under piles of garbage

By MICHAL YUDELMAN

"This is worse than anything I've seen in the Third World," a foreign correspondent exclaimed yesterday, after picking his way through the garbage heaps blocking the sidewalks. "It's like living in a trash can. The streets off the central bus station are rat infested. At least in Beirut we could shoot them."

After the night's rain, the two-week old garbage and mud combined to form a sticky, smelly pulp covering everything. The sight of pedestrians wearing gas masks in the streets earlier this week must have been contagious, for yesterday masks seemed almost staple attire: gas masks, white surgical masks, or simply a scarf, sweater or shirt tail draped over one's mouth and nose.

Another innovation first spotted yesterday was people toting little bottles of perfume, which they kept holding up to their noses, rather like smelling salts, to prevent them from passing out from the stench.

Business owners closed down their shops because the heaps of garbage filling the sidewalks and spilling over into the streets prevented access to their shops. The restaurants on Haikva's Etzel Street shut down one by one.

Strike enters 14th day, Page 4

"Who's going to come with the street covered with garbage?" one restaurateur said. "Even if someone wants to, all this garbage at the entrance would make him lose his appetite."

"You should see my street, it's covered with garbage and stinks so bad you feel you're suffocating every time you go out of the house," said Barbara, a dancer who lives on a street near Sheinkin. "This is the first time in years I've felt this, but I really

don't want to stay here any more. It's disgusting."

"I'm afraid to walk the dog, you don't know what cadaver he might dig up from those garbage piles," Yaakov, of Kikar Massaryk, said. "Yesterday I saw him playing with something and it turned out to be a rotting, stinking chicken. Who knows what diseases these things are spreading."

The residents of a well-to-do northern quarter hired a contractor and paid him to clean up their neighborhood.

But in the south, the battle was on.

"It's the mayor against the slum quarters," said a resident of Hatikva Quarter.

"If they put garbage piles this high near City Hall," he said, indicating the large piles of rotten chicken and meat. "I betcha the strike would end immediately."

The best of cities, worst of regions

By THOMAS O'DWYER

It may have been a dark and stormy night in Tel Aviv's central bus station, with the rotting trash, rats, hookers, drunks, and the smell of urine all around—but the city that never sleeps could be proud of itself. Yesterday it was declared the No. 1 quality city in the Middle East.

The Swiss-based Corporate Resources Group (CRG) issued its 1997 rankings for 192 world cities. Tel Aviv inexplicably nudged beautiful Dubai and marble-clad Abu Dhabi into second and third places.

The CRG advises the world's most important multinational companies and organizations on the relative differences in living conditions around the world. Executives use the reports to calculate allowances required by their expatriate workers doing stints in far-flung places.

Disgruntled field staff suspect bosses and rivals of also using the reports to devise fiendish punishment postings for out-of-favor diplomats, managers, and media correspondents.

The annual Quality of Living Report attempts to provide an accurate and unbiased evaluation of living conditions for workers transferred abroad. It arrives at an index based on 42 defined criteria. These include housing, living costs, availability of goods and services, security, schools, health, and social conditions.

New York is rated as having an index of 100. The top three cities in the world, according to these living standards, are Vancouver, Auckland, New Zealand, and Toronto, with scores of 105.5, 104.8, and 104.8.

Europe's top three are Zurich, Geneva, and Helsinki. Africa is generally a dismal place all around, except for Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Tunis. On the Middle East, the report says political tensions lower ratings everywhere. But Tel Aviv is indexed at 80.5, Dubai 71.3, and Abu Dhabi 70.7.

Places to avoid are Tripoli, Sana'a, and Baghdad—all below 42.

Alas, in world rankings, Tel Aviv doesn't make the top cut—it placed 87th out of 192.

Top city? Yes, but only because it's a lousy region.

Pullback map unlikely by next week

Levy, Abu Mazen meet today

By JAY BUSHINSKY,
LIAT COLLINS,
and ARNOLD O'SULLIVAN

A clearly defined map of the extent of Israel's second redeployment in the West Bank is unlikely to be ready in time for either next Sunday's cabinet meeting or Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's projected Paris rendezvous with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright next Wednesday, sources in Jerusalem said yesterday.

Foreign Minister David Levy is due to meet in Jerusalem today with Palestinian Authority deputy leader Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) to discuss the redeployment issue. Levy will consult before the meeting with Netanyahu.

The four-member cabinet team mapping the next redeployment in the West Bank will reconvene tomorrow in what is turning into a slow and careful process of demarcating Israel's essential lines of national security: along the Jordan River and the western slopes of the Samaritan and Judean hills.

The lack of a finished map does not trouble a senior official close to the decision-making process. He dismisses the notion that it will be pointless for Netanyahu and Albright to hold their third round of talks this month unless the withdrawal map is ready. He stressed that completion of the map was not set as a condition for the talks or Albright's follow-up session with Palestinian Authority

Chairman Yasser Arafat in Geneva.

"The prime minister will be able to discuss the guiding principles, the order of magnitude, and the problems inherent in transferring territory controlled by Israel to the PA," he said.

At the same time, he denied that the Clinton administration has been exerting heavy pressure for a swift decision on the parameters and timetable. "We are not being pressured," he said.

An aide to National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon—who along with Netanyahu and Foreign Minister David Levy and Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai are drawing up the map—contended that the four-man team "is making decisions which will determine the future of the State of Israel for generations to come." He said this cannot be done with a stopwatch in hand.

In that context, he said, Sharon will not budge on his proposal that there be a 20 km. security zone west of and parallel to the Jordan River and another security zone, 7 km. to 10 km. wide, east of the Green Line. He said "a serious effort must be made" to convince the US of this concept.

Assistant Secretary of State Martin Indyk reportedly plans to visit early next week and thus will be able to confer with Netanyahu and other team members immediately before the meeting with Albright and brief her accordingly.

See LEVY, Page 2

HU lab confirms Yemenite women aren't related

By JUDY SEGEL

The Hebrew University's genetics department admitted shamefacedly yesterday that the DNA test conducted by one of its researchers declaring with "99.9 percent certainty" that Margalit Omessi was the mother of Tzila Levine was incorrect—and that the two women of Yemenite origin are not related.

A few months ago, Dr. Hasan Khatib's analysis of the two women's genomic DNA was given as "proof" that Omessi, whose daughter went missing during the early days of the state, was the mother of Levine, who grew up with adoptive parents on a kibbutz and has since emigrated to California.

But more recently, the Health Ministry's Institute for Forensic Medicine at Abu Kabir, conducting a test of their mitochondrial DNA, declared with "absolute certainty" that the women were not related at all.



Margalit Omessi (left) and Tzila Levine (Israel Haaretz)

After the Abu Kabir results were issued, Omessi and Levine declared they would never believe the new findings and would regard each other as mother and daughter. They charged the results were "just another example of state discrimination" against Yemenites over the decades.

See YEMENITE, Page 2

NEWS

in brief

Court upholds demolition of bombers' homes

The homes of the families of the five terrorists involved in the Mahaneh Yehuda and Rehov Ben-Yehuda suicide bombings in Jerusalem will be sealed or demolished, following yesterday's rejection of the families' petitions by the High Court of Justice.

The families had contended that the identification of the bodies was not definite and had appealed the gravity of the decision handed down by OC Central Command Maj.-Gen. Uzi Dayan. A GSS investigation determined that the five had been members of a Hamas cell who had escaped from a Palestinian jail and hid out near their village, the court was told. There they were aided and fed by members of their families, the state said. *Batsheva Tsar*

Administrative detainee loses appeal

The Supreme Court yesterday rejected the appeal of an Israeli-Arab security detainee against the renewal of his administrative detention for another three months. The appellant was arrested for questioning six months ago, and when it became clear he could not be indicted, the defense minister signed a detention order for six months that was approved by the district court. A previous appeal against this order was rejected by the Supreme Court. Yesterday's appeal followed the imposition of another three months' detention, in response to a General Security Service evaluation that his release would endanger the public. *Tim*

US defense secretary postpones Mideast trip

US Secretary of Defense William Cohen announced yesterday he was postponing his trip to the Middle East that was to have begun this weekend. In a statement, Cohen said he canceled his visit to Israel, Egypt and Jordan because the situation in Iraq "remains unsettled... and demands continued monitoring."

He also said he is unable to travel because he must submit by December 18 a set of options on the US troop presence in Bosnia, which is supposed to end next June. *Hillel Kuttler*

Conference marks intifada anniversary

A conference was held at Jerusalem's Ambassador Hotel yesterday to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the outbreak of the intifada. Some 100 participants attended under the slogan, "Ten years since the intifada, negotiations, the Oslo Agreement. What's next?" Conference organizers included the Jerusalem Media Center headed by Ghassan Khatib and West Bank research centers.

During the three-hour conference the current stalemate in the peace process, the redeployment, the establishment of a Palestinian state, the status of Jerusalem in the final-status talks, and the future of the Palestinian people were discussed. *Mohammed Najib*

Leftist MKs visit Yosef

Shas spiritual mentor Ovadia Yosef met last night with a group of MKs, including Labor and Meretz members, and reportedly told them he had refrained from talking about diplomatic issues recently because the country's leadership was not sympathetic to the peace process. MK Dedi Zucker (Meretz), who was among those who initiated the meeting, said Yosef was pessimistic and concerned about the stalemate in the peace process. *Liat Collins*

PA denies Rajoub under house arrest

Officials at Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat's bureau in Gaza yesterday denied reports that Preventive Security chief Jibril Rajoub had been held under house arrest on Arafat's orders for five days. While denying his detention, the officials said Rajoub was summoned by Arafat shortly after returning from the US trip to clarify remarks he made there to foreign journalists and congressmen. Rajoub reportedly said that Arafat is unable to continue leading the people and that he would be Arafat's successor. *Margot Dudkevitch*

Two killed on roads

Mordechai Dapas, 47, a Mazkeret Batya driving instructor, was killed yesterday, and his son Dror, 22, seriously injured when their car was hit by a truck on Route 4 near the Mesubim interchange. The truck, for unknown reasons, swerved into oncoming traffic and overturned on top of Dapas's car.

Ike Stern, 22, of Jerusalem was killed and two others lightly injured when a truck slammed into the back of their car, which had slowed due to bad weather near the North Netanya interchange on the Coastal Highway. *Tim*

We deeply mourn the passing of our dear father and grandfather

Dr. ISAAC GUTTMANN

The funeral will take place today, December 10, 1997, at 1 p.m. at the Holon Cemetery.

Tamar Nadler
Riva and Romal Teltelbaum
Neta and Yossi Avner
and all the grandchildren

THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

mourns the passing of

Professor YOASH VAADIA

professor emeritus of plant physiology and former vice president and director-general of the Hebrew University, and expresses its condolences to the family.

Professor Vaadia died yesterday in the United States. Burial will be in Israel.

Funeral arrangements are still being made. Details can be obtained at 02-588-2903 or 588-2907.

Beit Daniel בית דניאל

Ruth and Gerard Daniel
Rabbi Meir Azari
and the Members of
Beit Daniel Congregation, Tel Aviv
sorrowfully announce the passing in old age of

WILLIAM DANIEL ויליאם דניאל

A dear and cherished man,
and a devoted lover of Israel,
in Santa Barbara, California

Iran's leader blasts the West, Israel

TEHERAN (AP) - Before the leaders of much of the Moslem world, Iran's top official delivered a rebuke yesterday reminiscent of the Islamic revolution he helped lead, condemning the US and calling on Moslems to unite against Israel.

But in a gesture to wary Arab leaders who had hoped Iran would show greater moderation, Iran's spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei assured them that Iran poses no threat to any Muslim country - a striking departure from the government's standing promise to export its revolution.

"Right now, we fear each other more than we fear the enemy," Khamenei said in inaugurating a 55-member Organization of the Islamic Conference. "The political designers of arrogance are breathing

their poisonous breath to make our neighbors in the Persian Gulf fearful of Islamic Iran."

The summit at a gleaming conference center below the snow-capped Alborz Mountains drew 28 heads of state, prime ministers and crown princes. Many of them were making their first trip to a country they had feared since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

The opening ceremony offered a telling sign, too, of the political ferment in Iran, with Khamenei and President Mohammad Khatami offering strikingly different views of relations with the West. Khamenei said that in the West, "money, gluttony and carnal desires are made the greatest aspirations." But Khatami, whose landslide victory in May electrified the country, called for dialogue and

respect for the West. Both of them, however, criticized the US military presence in the Gulf.

Prime Minister Binjamin Netanyahu yesterday dismissed suggestions that Israel was partially responsible for the setbacks in US Middle East policy and the apparent thaw between moderate Arabs and Iran. Netanyahu said Iran's ability to draw Moslem leaders to the summit was due not to the sinking fortunes of Arab-Israeli peace but to Iran's drive to arm itself with non-conventional weapons.

"Iran creates ballistic missiles and is trying to develop biological, chemical and nuclear weapons," he said. "The more it arms itself, and in the absence of any efforts to stop this process... more and more Arab leaders will flock to Iran."

Israeli agriculture experts reportedly visited Iran

By DAN GERSTENFELD

Sixteen Israeli agriculture experts, employed privately in Europe, recently visited Iran and advised the Iranians on establishing of breeding farms, fertilizers, and irrigation. Israel Radio reported.

According to the report, the Israelis were invited by private parties, but they did meet with the deputy minister of Agriculture.

After the group returned, the Iranian commercial attaché in a European country approached the Arab-Israeli Association and suggested renewing economic and commercial links between the two countries.

A spokesman for the Ministry of Agriculture said that it has no knowledge what so ever about such a visit. "If this visit did take place, it was organized by private organizations."

Industry sources doubted whether the visit actually took place.

Liat Collins adds:
MK Ran Cohen (Meretz) has filed an urgent motion for the agenda following the reports. He is asking whether the visit was made on the government's behalf and whether it indicates a change in the relations with Iran.

He said the relationship with Iran should not be developed at the moment because it could worsen the tension with Iraq.

Jerusalem Arabs split on participating in census



Palestinian boy scouts ride through A-Ram in northern Jerusalem yesterday to drum up support for the Palestinian Authority's census. (Reuters)

By ELLI WOHLGELERITER

Jerusalem's Arabs seem to be split over whether it is good for them to participate in the census being conducted by the Palestinian Authority.

"This is Israel, not Palestine," said Ali Halabi, of Abu Dis, who received the census forms two weeks ago. He said that while he would take part in the counting in his village - which falls outside Jerusalem's municipal limits - his friends in eastern Jerusalem would not.

"In Jerusalem, they are afraid," he said. "They need to have an Israeli ID to work, and they are afraid they might lose it."

Halabi, 23, added that the census is very important for the Palestinians "because of economics - it'll help with planning, the PA will know what to plan for."

Standing outside his grocery on Rehov Musrara, Ziad, 25, of Bet Hanina, did not hesitate for a moment when asked whether he would participate in the census.

"The most important thing is the ID card," he said. "It's more important than the census."

Down the street, Michael, 18, sat on the guard rails on Rehov Sulim.

Suleiman with a couple of friends. What is most important to him, he said, is having an ID card and being able to work, because "I am the breadwinner of the family. I work with Israelis, and they [the PA] don't give us any money."

Inside the Old City, the talk was more militant. Shop owner Ahmed said he is not afraid of losing his identity card: "We lost everything - the Jews took everything." He said he would take part if approached.

Abed Khaled had no doubt where he stands on the issue. "Of course, I am Palestinian!" he said defiantly. "I am not afraid because I am first and last a Palestinian citizen. I carry the Israeli ID because it is the only document I can use."

The majority of Palestinians want to be counted, Khaled said, except the less educated in the population who are afraid of losing their rights to National Insurance Institute payments.

The Palestinian census in Jerusalem

ANALYSIS

By SHIMON SHETREY

The Palestinian Authority yesterday conducted a census in the areas it controls, either wholly or partially (Areas A and B). It also announced that it may conduct the census in east Jerusalem, provoking a strong Israeli objection. The Oslo Accords, however, may provide a basis for each side to justify its position.

The Israeli position is clearly based on the provisions of the interim agreement signed in Washington in September 1995. According to this agreement, Jerusalem issue will be decided in the permanent-status talks. Until then, no offices of the PA may be in Jerusalem, but must be restricted to Areas A or B. The agreement

also states that Palestinian officials cannot exercise governmental authority in areas outside their territorial jurisdiction.

The Israeli position is that conducting a census in east Jerusalem is a violation of the accord. Israel also claims that the Palestinians are violating the agreement by deploying their tourism police in Jerusalem, and operating a number of offices, such as the Waik Ministry and Orient House.

The Palestinian position, however,

is that the interim agreement provides that Palestinians in Jerusalem may participate elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council under special voting arrangements. From this, it follows, the Palestinians maintain, that they can conduct a census in Jerusalem.

The balance of the arguments seems to favor the Israeli position, and thus if a neutral tribunal will have to make a judgment, it would rule for Israel. But in fact the matter stands to be decided in the Israeli courts, should Israeli officials try to prevent the census. Until then, the matter is a subject for public opinion to decide.

The writer is a professor of law at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

LEVY

Continued from Page 1

YEMENITE

Continued from Page 1

TURKEY

Continued from Page 1

At this stage, the cabinet has not yet able to decide on the exact percentage of Area C to be ceded to the PA, the senior official said, concluding that speculation about a gap between Abarig's purported preference for 12 percent hand-over as against the government's 6%-8% and the PA's demand for 30% is premature and baseless.

Netanyahu told the Likud Knesset faction last night that any additional redeployment would then be carried out within the framework of the permanent arrangements. He said the talks on the redeployment "are not a process of whom and you're finished."

According to an official briefing, Netanyahu said that to ensure the Palestinians are fulfilling their commitments, Israel will wait five months between the final decision on redeployment and its execution. In this period, a security plan will be formulated, he said.

In Istanbul, Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai said yesterday the redeployment must take place. "I never thought we could go [directly] to the final agreement; it's impossible. We have to find the way to progress. And it is best to carry out the second redeployment and get on with the peace process," he told Israeli reporters.

He said there are points which would make security difficult, and they have to be discussed in depth. "I have instructed the army to prepare a number of alternatives and, immediately after returning to Israel, I will deal with this and various possibilities will be presented in the ministerial committee - and I presume to the cabinet soon," he said.

The university's original analysis was hailed by Yemenite immigrant organizations as proof that Yemenite children were "kidnapped" by childless Ashkenazim.

A Hebrew University spokeswoman explained that Khatib had never before conducted DNA tests on humans to determine maternity or paternity, but only for research purposes, and most of his work was done on animals to improve genetic strains.

The *Jerusalem Post* learned that when he came out with his near-certain declaration, some colleagues quietly protested that Khatib was not qualified to make this specific ruling, but the university administration argued that because of academic freedom, it could not intervene.

The HU genetics lab, headed by Prof. Moshe Soler, recently asked the Abu Kabir institute for details on the genetic markers their scientists used to rule out a genetic relationship.

The HU genetics lab staffers, including Khatib, repeated their original tests and reached the same conclusions as before, but when using the additional markers, it became clear they had made a terrible error: Yemenite Jews' genetic makeup is significantly different from that of most other Jews, and thus it was impossible to depend on only a dozen or so markers to confirm genetic closeness.

Mitochondrial DNA tests (which examine the DNA of rod-shaped cell structures involved in energy supply) can negate a genetic relationship with complete certainty, while genomic DNA tests can never offer completely certain results.

But the moment the Turks wanted technological know-how, the Americans balked.

"They are a superpower and want to keep that to themselves," one official said.

Israeli officials said they are competing to be the subcontractor for a \$3.5 billion deal to build attack helicopters. Israel also is offering to upgrade Turkey's M-60 main battle tank and is to submit a tender to produce the Merkava III tank. Next week, the Turks are to decide between an Israeli and a German company in a tender to replace its army's assault rifles.

"There is a possibility of further cooperation with Israel Aircraft Industries," Mordechai said, adding that the joint production of the Arrow missile could not be ruled out.

In previous meetings with Turkish defense officials, Mordechai said Israel is prepared to "go up a notch" in transferring weapons technology.

Ivry, a former air force commander and Defense Ministry director-general, agreed.

"We are prepared to open technology" to the Turks, he said. "We are not talking of operational cooperation. We are talking of technologies and systems. This is where we want to cooperate."

To Naomi and Gerry Rosenblum
Mazal Tov on the occasion of the
Brit Mila of their son
Dori Matan
Best wishes from all their friends and
colleagues in the USA

OUR YEMENITE CHILDREN
Shocking Revelations

Ruth Matar
discusses
a problem which refuses to lie buried

With
Tsila Levine - finally reunited with her mother
Rabbi Menachem Porush - Former Knesset Member
Marina Solodkin - Knesset Member
Jonathan Rosenblum - Jerusalem Post Columnist

Tonight, Wednesday, December 10, at 9:00 p.m.
Arutz 7 - English Program, 97.3 FM Radio

* This new hour-long program in English of
"Women in Green" will be broadcast every Wednesday at 9:00 p.m.

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US, EU fight PLO upgrade at UN

By MARILYN HENRY

NEW YORK - The US and the European Union were trying yesterday to stymie, for the second time, a UN General Assembly resolution that would upgrade the status of the PLO from that of a UN observer to nearly that of a full member state.

"We could not accept that they would give themselves a status similar to a member state," Jean-Louis Wolzfeld, ambassador of Luxembourg and the EU president for the month of December, said in an interview shortly before the General Assembly was scheduled

to convene yesterday.

The vote on the PLO's status, which was part of a package of resolutions linked to the UN's annual debate on the "question of Palestine," had been postponed since Thursday. The US was seeking to have it postponed again, until after December 18 when Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will have met with Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat, European sources at the UN said.

There were also unconfirmed reports that Albright had appealed to Arafat to withdraw the draft resolution, which would give the PLO "the same rights and privi-

leges of participation as those conferred upon member states, with the exception of voting and candidature." This would allow the Palestinian delegation to sponsor resolutions and to be seated at the UN in alphabetical order, rather than at the side, with other observers, such as Switzerland, the Vatican, and the Arab League.

The EU opposed an official change in the Palestinian observer's status, noting that the UN Charter confers membership only on sovereign states. "We are ready to improve day-to-day operations" for the observer, Wolzfeld said.

With support from the Non-

Aligned Movement and the Arab Group, the Palestinians were expected to have an automatic majority in the 185-member General Assembly and could override American, European, and Israeli opposition. However, Wolzfeld said, "I think the Palestinians are interested in having the EU on board, because we play a role in the Middle East. If they want us on board, they will have to make concessions."

The PLO first received observer status in 1974. This was bolstered in 1988, when the assembly changed its UN designation from the PLO to "Palestine."



First snow
An IDF soldier poses yesterday during the first snowfall of the winter at an outpost on the Golan Heights. (Avim Shapira/Israel Sun)

PLO office in Washington reopens

By HILLEL KUTTLER

WASHINGTON - "PLO office. Hello."

That greeting is now two words longer than what callers to the organization's downtown headquarters heard on the telephone for the past four months.

In a letter to US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, President Bill Clinton declared Monday night to allow the office to officially reopen after the US government declared it closed with the expiration on August 12 of the

Middle East Peace Facilitation Act.

Clinton's decision ends the charade of the office remaining open and functioning normally but being unable to identify itself for what it is. A senior US official said that in the negotiations over the recently signed foreign operations bill, the administration had pressed for the president to have the authority to reopen the office.

"We believe the office being open is of help in conducting dialogue" with the Palestinians, the official said. "The president has the author-

ity and used the authority. People shouldn't read anything else into it."

Meanwhile, US special envoy Frank Wisner is due to visit Israel next week to discuss efforts to curtail Russia's cooperation with Iran's long-range missile program. Wisner will spend "two to three days" in Israel as "part of the dialogue" between Washington and Jerusalem on the issue, an Israeli embassy official said. The visit was arranged prior to last week's visit here on the matter by the prime minister's adviser, Uzi Arad, the official added.

RUSSIAN PRESS REVIEW

By YOSEF BEGUN

Dire straits

The Oslo Agreements drove Israel into a narrow strait between Charybdis, "where Labor pushed it," and Scylla, "where Likud took it," Sofia Ron writes in *Vesti*.

To steer towards either would be fatal for our country, she comments. Labor wants to return us to the 1967 borders (Charybdis) which, according to Abba Eban, "are the borders of Auschwitz." The current government is ready to serve up a sacrifice to Scylla - settlements - to save Gush Etzion and the Jordan Valley.

In Homer's *Odyssey*, Ulysses's sacrificing some of his company to appease Scylla did help to save the rest of his crew. Despite this, "alone in tatters, he returned home," Ron reminds us. "Contrary to the fatalistic ancient Greek world view, Judaism asserts freedom of choice. And the Oslo Accords are not being imposed by supernatural forces. They are a hazardous venture undertaken by irresponsible politicians striving for political power, Ron writes. The only choice is "to turn back to avoid this treacherous strait."

Incitement against 'inciter'

Right-wing extremist Avigdor Eskin is in the headlines again. Lev Malinsky in *Nasha Strana* calls Eskin a "local Girmovsky" (the Russian politician known for his outrageous public behavior).

Malinsky says that in the current atmosphere of "spy mania," several MKs from various parties accused Eskin of being an "agent of the Shabak planted among the right-wingers... and receiving a salary from the police."

Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani and MK Silvan Shalom (Likud) deny the allegations.

Leonid Skolnik writes in *Novosti Nedeli* that the new attacks against Eskin are an attempt to create yet another "Russian" sensation in the Israeli

mass media after the Avigdor Lieberman affair. In an interview with him, Eskin says, "Some people in the establishment don't accept my popularity and are trying to malign me... They are the same ones who used Avishai Raviv."

As an example of his growing popularity, Eskin says people greet him on the street and express their support.

Pushkin in Israel

In *Vesti*, Yanna Sudakova writes that in a year and a half, the world will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of the most famous Russian poet, Alexander Pushkin.

He is also the best known Russian writer in Israel, because "new immigrants brought him with them in their hearts," says Anatoly Alexin, a renowned Russian author who now lives and writes in Israel.

Thanks to the devoted work of enthusiasts, a branch of the Russian-based foundation to commemorate Pushkin's 200th birthday has been established here. A Russian-Israeli stamp has been issued in honor of the event.

Unfortunately, Pushkin is not studied in Israeli schools, even though his work has been translated into Hebrew.

Israeli poet Abraham Shlonsky did the best-known translation of Pushkin's poem *Eugene Onegin*.

Russians don't litter

The mass wave of Russian aliyah brought a more environment-conscious population, writes *Vesti* journalist Alex Prilutsky, referring to the results of a national campaign for cleaner streets. A poll revealed that the majority of Israeli citizens are indifferent to dirt and pollution.

But after the campaign, he says, many people changed their attitude.

There is much to be done in this country to achieve the goal of cleaning up the cities. It was Russian MKs, he writes, who lobbied in the Knesset to clean-up the environment.

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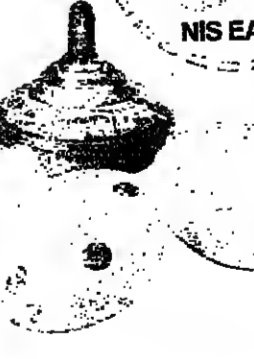
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Barak dismisses talk of party infighting

By LIAT COLLINS

Labor Party leader Ehud Barak yesterday played down ongoing reports of party infighting. "There is no stalemate within the Labor Party," he said.

"Once every five years the party builds its central committee, which is like a birth; a painful process which leaves a few scars. The scars disappear and the party will be able to get on with its main job: uniting the people and changing the government."

Despite the problems, Barak

said, the creation of a central committee had never been smoother. Recalling the rival political camps which existed in the party in the past, he noted that "At long last, today there are no camps."

Asked about an attack on him at the party convention by MK Haggai Merom, Barak said he is not bothered by it. "But it's a pity. Merom is someone who could contribute to the party or hinder it. Since the party is democratic, everyone can choose whether to contribute and help us go forward or to hinder us. I have no doubt

that the headlines Merom provided did not help the Labor Party. I'm sure he will come to [his senses] and start helping again."

Labor whip Ra'anan Cohen called on all faction members "to pull themselves together and stop the internal fighting, which harms the party and deflects the public agenda to marginal issues. The opposition's fight against the government, which is again evading the second further redeployment, should be strengthened and it should see the main goal as changing the government."

Checking out erotic calls

When "Heli" sweet-talked a "customer" on a service for erotic calls and introductions, she was obviously unaware that the caller was Economic Committee chairman Avi Yehzekel and that "the friends" she could hear laughing in the background included other committee members and representatives of Bezek and phone operating companies.

Yehzekel called a number he arbitrarily picked from a newspaper to check out reports that Bezek's 057 code - intended for information services such as weather reports, sports results, and theater performances - is being used by companies offering sexual services, after the 056 code on which they used to operate was blocked.

"Heli," it turned out, preferred to speak to Eliezer Zandberg (Domet), although she promised Yehzekel she could arrange a meeting with another girl for him. Zandberg incidentally checked how much Heli earns: NIS 14 an hour.

Elon angry at bill block

Benny Elon (Moledet) yesterday criticized the decision to postpone by a week the discussion on his bill calling for the television license fee to be abolished. He accused coalition whip Meir Sheerit of opposing the bill because of his personal involvement in the Israel Broadcasting Authority.

Sheerit rejected the charges as "nonsense." He said that although he is a former member of the IBA executive committee, he is no longer involved with the authority and acts strictly according to public norms. He said the government objects to the idea of abolishing the license fee because it would

AT THE KNESSET

By LIAT COLLINS

make the public state television dependent on ratings.

More cemeteries for doubtful Jews

The Religious Affairs Ministry has promised Yisrael Ba'aliya whip Roman Bronfman that by the end of this year it will budget for three more regional cemeteries for people whose Jewishness is in doubt and plans for 30 such cemeteries by the end of 1998. Today there are 13 such cemeteries.

Women should join Navy

The IDF should allow women to serve as seagoing naval officers like it has opened pilot training to females, said Yael Dayan (Labor), Naomi Chazan, and Anat Maor (both Meretz), at a meeting of the Committee on the Status of Women yesterday. There are apparently 15 women with naval experience who are interested in serving in the navy as seagoing officers.

Capt. Nir Maor, of the navy's personnel division, said he is sure women could successfully complete the training, but there has still been no decision in principle in the IDF that women can serve in combat roles.

New rules for time-share apartments

Rafi Elul (Labor), chairman of

the Committee for Public Complaints, said after a meeting yesterday that within two weeks all companies dealing with time-share apartments will be obliged to sign an agreement establishing certain set conditions. These will include allowing customers to cancel a contract within two weeks of signing, without being fined.

Decision on Reading closure in July

The decision on closing the Reading power station in Tel Aviv should be taken in July, according to Avraham Poraz (Shinui) who wrote to the director of the Interior Ministry's national planning authority on the subject.

In the reply it was noted that, in July 1996, the National Planning and Construction Council had given the power station two years to prepare a national outline plan on the power station. An environmental impact report should be ready by April.

Call for authority to supervise firefighters

At a meeting of the Interior Committee dealing with the fire department, Michal Goldman called for a state authority to be established to coordinate and supervise the system. "Strikes, the inability to pay, bloated work agreements, and the lack of a standard wage scale for firefighters, together with huge salaries in some places, have created a poor image," he said.



Saving a life
Laura Tessler braces her friends Yonit Wildman (right) and Yaffa Faleck as they have blood drawn at Jerusalem's Magen David Adom yesterday, as part of a worldwide search for a marrow donor to save British student Karen Morris from dying of leukemia. (Boim Handler)

Secular group plans Shabbat demo in Tiberias

By HAIM SHAPIRO

When a rabbi moved in next door to Kochava Dehan in Tiberias a year and a half ago, little did she imagine she would one day be the focus of a countrywide battle between haredi and secular publics.

This Shabbat people from around the country, organized by Am Hofshi, an organization dedicated to safeguarding the rights of the secular public, are planning to come to Tiberias to express their solidarity with Dehan, who says her family has been the object of repeated attacks and harassment from a yeshiva next door.

According to Dehan, the yeshiva, established by Rabbi Dov Kook, husband of the well-known religious exporter Rabbanit Kook, was given the house, the former official residence of the Tiberias chief rabbi, by the municipality. Later, she said, he built a second storey without a municipal permit and established a yeshiva for former criminals and drug addicts. Dehan, who insists the ultimate object of the attacks is to force her

Negotiations with Tel Aviv garbage workers continue

By MICHAL YUDELMAN

Barring last-minute developments, Tel Aviv residents will wake up to one more day of life amid the mounting garbage piles, as the garbage strike enters its 14th day.

Yesterday's rain and stormy winds blew garbage from the sidewalks into the streets, where it became a messy pulp. The talks between the workers and city appeared close to an agreement on Monday night, after the intervention of Histadrut Chairman Amir Peizetz earlier in the day.

Mayor Ronni Milo hastened to announce on *Popolitika* "an historic achievement" in introducing private contractors to clean up the city. But his glee was brief, as soon afterward the negotiations stalled.

Yesterday the talks resumed, but broke up every few hours, with both sides exchanging accusations. When union head Arnon Bar-David left the negotiating room yesterday evening, however, he noted there are only two issues left to be resolved.

The workers, who had intended to declare a 24-hours respite in the

strike to clean up problem areas, such as the Hatikva and Carmel markets, changed their mind and charged the city with trying to dictate terms which were not included in the agreement reached with Peizetz.

Nonetheless, as a gesture to city residents, sanitation teams showed hundreds of kilograms of rotten meat and chicken from the Hatikva market, where the stench is intolerable and residents walk around wearing masks.

According to the agreement reached with Peizetz, arbitration, private contractors will collect garbage in the northern neighborhoods of Ramat Aviv, Gimmel and Azorel Hen, and in Florentine and Kiryat Shalom in the south.

On Shabbat, private contractors employing non-Jewish workers will clean up entertainment centers all over the city.

The city also agreed to purchase new garbage trucks and equipment, promised not to fire any sanitation workers, and to put them all on the collective wage agreement, rather than the personal contracts under which they are now working.

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Censorship in the Information Age

It is likely just a matter of time until the Israel public learns what former Mossad agent Yehuda Gil looks like. It is true that Tel Aviv District Court Chief Judge Menahem Eban ruled yesterday that the Israeli media still is forbidden from publishing photographs of Yehuda Gil, who is charged with filing falsified

made blurry. Eban ruled that there was no national security interest at stake in justifying preventing the publication of the pictures of Gil's relatives.

But he said that Gil's image "blurred or otherwise - should remain censored within Israel, because the more extensive the distribution of the picture, the greater the danger that Mossad contacts who had dealings with Gil will be endangered."

Moser, like Karniel, believes that if the picture transcends the judge will reconsider his ruling and permit Gil's picture to be published domestically.

"In the past in cases like this, the judge maintains the justification of national security until it is proven to him that the publication has taken place around the world," Moser said.

He said there was nothing wrong with the Israeli media continuing to press for local publication, leaving it to the court to weigh the interests of press freedom and security.

"The role of the newspaper is to try to publish as much as they can, to bring the public as much information as possible," he said.

The growing access to information and images relating to Israel's once-stagnant intelligence community is beginning to follow a well-worn path: A piece of information is revealed in a foreign news outlet - the latest example being the revelation of Yehuda Gil's name in a British paper - and the Israeli courts decide that domestic censorship has become pointless.

Media insiders strongly suspect that in many of these cases the overseas media are obtaining their facts and photos from frustrated Israeli journalists, hoping that, even in this roundabout way, they will be able to get the scoop. Does this trend damage Israel's national security?

"Probably," Karniel says, "but it is damage that is unavoidable."

IN CONTEXT

But the harsh realities of the global information age practically guarantee that sooner or later, his face will be shown on cable television outlets, foreign news magazines and Internet sites accessible in Israel.

In such an environment, "there is no doubt that this court ruling will not stand for long," reasons Dr. Yuval Karniel, lecturer on media law and communication at Ramat Gan College of Law. "His picture will eventually be on our screens on CNN and BBC and it will be ridiculous if it is not published here. The moment that the information is exposed in the wider world, there is no reason to prevent the citizens in Israel from having the information."

In a court hearing yesterday, attorney Mibi Moser, representing Yehuda Aharonov, Ha'aretz and the Israel Broadcasting Authority, tried to make the case that forbidding the publication of the picture for security reasons had become patently absurd.

To convince the court, he displayed copies of an Italian newspaper that had published Gil's photograph on Monday. Already, a rival Italian paper has followed suit and published an even larger copy of the photograph.

Moser was contesting the petition by Gil's attorneys requesting that Gil's picture be barred from publication in any form, including photographs in which his face had been blurred, and forbidding the publication of photographs of Gil's family members. The request was clearly a response to a picture that had graced Yehuda Aharonov the same day: Gil sitting with his wife, hand in hand, his wife's face was shown clearly while Gil's had been

Papon admits one man's deportation

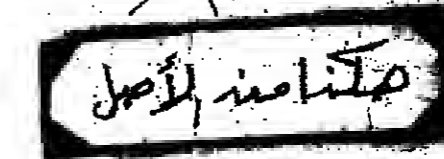
BORDEAUX (AP) - Former Vichy official Maurice Papon yesterday blamed inexperience and emotional turmoil for his decision to deport Leon Librach, a French Jew who perished in Auschwitz, and called the decision his "curse."

It was the first time since his trial began two months ago that Papon, 87, did not argue he was only carrying out orders when he signed the deportation commands sent Jews to Nazi death camps.

Papon is charged with signing the arrest orders that led to the deportation of 1,690 Jews from Bordeaux between 1942-44.

Projecting a document with Papon's signature on a large screen in the courtroom, prosecutors said Papon went out of his way to transfer Librach to the Merignac transit camp outside the city instead of keeping him in a Bordeaux prison. Papon, for the first time during the trial, did not disown responsibility or simply answer such charges by saying he had acted to save Jews. Instead, he responded by saying he was only 31 when he took up his post as a police supervisor of the surrounding Gironde region.

"I arrived without experience," Papon told the court. "These facts are inscribed in a kind of fog. I was still stunned by the death of my father. I underestimated the importance of the Librach case. This file is my curse."



Cancer patients turn to Weizman

By BATSHEVA TSUR

President Ezer Weizman yesterday promised to contact the Health and Finance ministries over the removal of vital medication for young cancer patients from the "basket" provided by the health funds.

"I shall do my best and more," the president told a group of young cancer victims, who appealed to him to intervene on their behalf. "Your ability to cope is remarkable."

Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman changed his mind yesterday and decided to accept the Health Ministry recommendation to allocate a budget for 14 special medications not covered by the health funds, Israel Radio reported last night.

The youngsters were brought to Beit Hanassi by the Hayim Association, a volunteer group that raises funds to provide additional medical and psychological services in the oncological ward at Schneider Children's Medical Center for Israel in Petah Tikva. They were invited to visit by Reuma Weizman, the president's wife.

Hayim chairman Ofer Even, who had suffered from leukemia 12 years ago, also appealed to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu not to cut the budget for cancer victims, totalling some NIS 150 million annually. "I beg you not to have the lives of these young children on your conscience," Even said.

Even today, families of the victims were forced to pay hundreds and sometimes thousands of shekels for rare medication, Even said, noting that often one parent stopped working for two years to



President Ezer Weizman listens to young cancer victims describe their fight to survive the disease yesterday. (Isaac Harari)

tend a cancer-ridden child who was undergoing treatment.

"Some 70 percent of these victims survive today, but this percent-

age will drop if the medication is not available," he said. "Those of us who have walked in the shadow of death know the value of life."

"Saving a life is supposed to be our greatest value," said 20-year-old Rami Cohen, who is recovering from the disease. "I invite the min-

isters of finance and health to Schneider hospital to see how the children are struggling for their lives."

Cut in funding for periphery enrichment programs draws flak

By ARYEH DEAN COHEN

The Education Ministry's plan to halve its support for the Karem program, which provides enrichment programs for youngsters in development towns and other settlements in the periphery, has come under fire from MK Rafi Elul (Labor) and the chairman of the Union of Local Authorities' education committee, Shmuel Abnav.

The program provides these services in some 80 local authorities, and employs 3,500 teachers, some 700 of them new immigrants.

The Education Ministry previously had agreed to provide NIS 83.4 million in support for the program for 1998, about half its budget, but in recent days it was learned that sum would be cut in half.

The Education Ministry's

decision is a death blow to an educational operation which works with 175,000 pupils and thousands of teachers throughout the country," Abnav said. "This decision means that all the promises about a long school day and giving preference to the periphery and the development towns are all lies, the government is not meeting its commitment," Elul said on Israel Radio.

"They are trying to pull one over on us. The government wrote one thing in the budget, but is doing something else, and we won't allow this."

"This cut is another, no less serious stage in the harsh decrees landing for the second straight year on the Israeli education system," Abnav said. He called on Education Minister Zevulun Hammer to cancel the decision immediately.

Zissmann says Treasury being unfair to teachers

By ARYEH DEAN COHEN

Knesset Education Committee chairman Emanuel Zissmann yesterday blasted the Finance Ministry for not living up to its agreement with the Secondary School Teachers Association, and said it would be held responsible if the teachers renew sanctions next week.

"If the secondary school teachers renew their sanctions and refuse to accompany any activity outside the schools, the blame for this will be solely on the Finance Ministry," Zissmann, who had worked out a compromise to temporarily end the sanctions, said.

Zissmann said that the Finance Ministry's offer to pay the teachers NIS 100 for each day they accompany trips, including overnight, ran completely counter to the agreement reached in the committee two weeks ago, according to which they would be paid on an hourly basis. "The Finance Ministry's offer isn't serious, and I

take a very grave view of this," Zissmann said.

At a previous committee meeting, it was agreed that if the Finance Ministry did not make a serious proposal to solve the dispute, the Education Committee would back the teachers' stand on the issue.

Committee member Raby Rivlin (Likud) said: "If the Finance Ministry people want to use us to try to make a joke of the matters discussed in the committee, we won't come to the meetings and we'll try to find solutions via legislation."

Association chairman Ran Erez told the committee he held two meetings with Finance Ministry representatives, who told him "they didn't have any money."

"I think they should present data, and not just make do with simple statements," he said. "This isn't serious negotiation. I'm happy that we agreed to the committee's recommendation and suspended the sanctions, because

now the committee can also see the delays and maneuvering the Finance Ministry has been employing on this matter for three years."

Erez said the teachers had been willing to spread out the payment for the hours spent accompanying the trips, and have it paid in stages. Zissmann said the committee backed the teachers' stand on the matter, adding: "I want to express my anger over the position of the Finance Ministry, which is grossly violating a wage agreement."

Erez agreed to Zissmann's request to postpone renewal of the sanctions until Sunday, during which time Zissmann promised to use all the powers at the committee's disposal to bring pressure to bear on the Finance Ministry.

A Finance Ministry spokesman said that the teachers' demands would cost some NIS 100 million. "We will continue to make suggestions that are in keeping with our budgetary policy," the spokesman said.

NEWS

in brief

US extraditing man for traffic fatality

The US will extradite to Israel a truck driver wanted in connection with the October 1992 traffic accident in which then-president of the Hebrew University Prof. Yoram Ben-Porat, his wife and son were killed.

Haim Nagar was arrested at the scene of the accident, on the Arava Road north of Eilat, but fled the country in 1994 during court proceedings against him in Beersheba. Israel put out an international arrest warrant and he finally was tracked down in March of this year in New York. He was meanwhile sentenced to a year's imprisonment for his involvement in a New York stabbing incident.

Nagar will be returned to Israel under police escort in the next few days, the Justice Ministry said.



Prof. Yoram Ben-Porat (Werner Braun)

Bassiouny's immunity applies to civil cases

The Foreign Ministry learned yesterday from the media that a civil suit has been filed against Egyptian Ambassador Mohammed Bassiouny, it said in a statement yesterday. The statement added: Ambassador Bassiouny is a veteran ambassador and enjoys considerable respect in Israel; the criminal investigation opened by the police was, for all intents and purposes, closed by the State Attorney's Office; the diplomatic immunity that the ambassador enjoys from Israeli jurisdiction applies to the circumstances of this case as well.

Man convicted of 1988 rape

Tel Aviv District Court yesterday convicted Meir Filo, 33, of Eli, of raping a teenage girl on September 17, 1988. Filo picked the girl up at the bus stop near the settlement she lived in and then drove off the main road and raped her.

The girl delayed reporting the incident to police because she was scared that people, especially her father, would find out about it. When she filed her complaint, police found that a complaint had been filed against Filo in October 1991 for trying to sexually assault a student at the Herzliya Gymnasium. That file, which had been closed because Filo did not have a criminal record, was reopened and Filo also was convicted of attempting to commit an indecent act.

Public must test personal gas appliances

The gas companies have checked the safety of only 75 percent of gas canisters and appliances in the homes of their clients and there is a danger to the public from unsafe equipment, the Knesset State Control Committee was told yesterday. The National Infrastructure Ministry therefore plans to cancel its contract with the gas companies and to make it mandatory for people to test gas appliances regularly at their own expense. Appliances that are found unsafe will be cut off from gas, ministry officials said. Committee chairman Yossi Katz (Labor) said many gas burners are placed on closed balconies with insufficient ventilation and that this poses a safety hazard.

Peled warns against bike trip to Jordan

Deputy Education Minister Moshe Peled has warned parents not to send their children on a Hanukka bicycle trip to Jordan being organized by the United Kibbutz Movement because proper security arrangements have not been made. The Education Ministry said it would forbid the trip to proceed without proper security. Peled charged parents had not been informed of the lack of security arrangements, and the invitations sent to the youngsters by organizers did not relate to the itinerary, but only to registration fees, clothes, food, etc.

Burg calls Swiss Holocaust fund a 'deception'

"The solidarity fund [planned by the Swiss government to aid Holocaust survivors] is a deception," Jewish Agency Chairman Avraham Burg told a visiting delegation of Swiss journalists in Jerusalem yesterday. "By the time the fund issues any real relief, there will be almost no elderly victims left alive to benefit from it, and they are clearly our first concern." Burg also noted that the fund established by the Swiss banking and private sectors, which has begun to disburse \$11 million in assistance to Holocaust survivors in eastern Europe, was only created to provide "seed money for a solution, and not a final arrangement."

Jerusalem gets new British consul-general

Robin Kealy today takes up his post as Britain's consul-general in Jerusalem. For the last two years, he had been the head of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Aviation and Maritime Department. Kealy, 53, has also served in Iraq, Kuwait, and Libya in this region, and elsewhere in Europe and North and Central America.

Special phone card for national servicewomen

A special telephone card for young women doing their national service has been issued by Bezeq. Called Keshcard, it offers the bearer a 10-percent discount on calls and is being distributed free over the next three months.

Crime up 44% among youth from Ethiopia

By ARYEH DEAN COHEN

The number of criminal files opened against juveniles from the Ethiopian community is up 44 percent over the first 10 months of this year, the Knesset Immigration and Absorption Committee was told yesterday.

Ch.-Supt. Noa Ben-Nudiz, of the police juvenile investigation unit, told the committee that 170 files had been opened in that period, compared to 118 during a similar period last year.

"We're talking about property offenses, disorder and use of violence, mainly. The

main problem we face in the police is the almost total inability to communicate with the children's parents. They don't understand the language, and are unwilling to accept the fact that the child committed a crime," Ben-Nudiz said.

Yael Oren, a probation officer said that 243 youngsters had been referred for handling by her department in the first six months of this year, as compared to 330 in months of 1996. The youngsters were convicted of crimes ranging from drug use to break-ins and use of violence, she said. She said that not a single Ethiopian probation officer had been appointed, despite the fact that there

are many Ethiopian social workers available to fill such positions. This limited effectiveness in dealing with parents, she said.

"We are seeing a serious and growing phenomena of youngsters aged seven or eight from the Ethiopian community wandering the streets and committing property crimes, stealing bread, drinks or cakes just to stay alive," committee chairwoman Naomi Blumenthal said.

She added that the rise in the number of criminal files reflects neglect by the authorities who should be helping the youngsters.

MK Adisu Massala (Labor) complained about the lack of suitable frameworks for

Ethiopian youths after school. "In Beersheba I know of a gang headed by a 13-year-old which is terrorizing people in the malls there. The people in charge of dealing with these youngsters know about its existence, but are doing nothing," he said.

"We're seeing a ticking bomb which not only hurts members of the Ethiopian community, but also impacts on all of society. I call on the prime minister to adopt a policy of positive discrimination in providing special funding to deal with the issue."

The committee decided to set up a sub-committee to investigate the matter and make recommendations.

Accident scam nets millions from insurance

By DAVID RUDGE

Police are trying to estimate the scope of a scam in which insurance companies were tricked into paying millions of shekels for fake car accidents and injuries.

Danny Bronfman, 19, of Kiryat Bialik, and Ofer Sharon, of Haifa, were arrested in connection with the scam, which they had allegedly been running with the aid of others for a number of years.

They were brought before Haifa Magistrate's Court on Monday. Bronfman, the suspected ringleader, was remanded in custody for seven days. Sharon was released on bail.

Police yesterday questioned a Haifa lawyer. Detectives earlier raided his office and confiscated documents. Police spokesman Supt. Moshe Nisan said several other people are expected to be brought in for questioning.

The possibility that the con artists may have received assistance from a nurse at a hospital in the Haifa area is also being investigated, he said.

Nisan noted that insurance companies believed that between 500 to

800 falsified claims were submitted over a long period of time. The sums involved in each ranged from a few thousand shekels for alleged personal injuries to much larger sums for damage to cars which were reportedly deliberately driven into walls, trees, or light standards.

The cars, which were all covered by comprehensive insurance, would be so badly damaged they would be written off as a "total loss." Nisan said that the vehicles were those had a market value much lower than the "book price."

Police suspect that Bronfman instructed others how to fake injuries and complain of aches and pains, particularly in the neck, that could not be verified. The "accident victim" would then go to the hospital, be examined, and usually be released wearing a neck brace. The vehicle in which the alleged accident occurred would usually be damaged after receipt of the medical report.

Nisan said that armed with medical reports, an accident form would be filled in at the police station. These reports would then form the basis for a personal injury claim.

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Kyoto: A lot of hot air?

The El Nino giant weather machine yesterday flexed its muscles and dumped devastating rain storms on the American West Coast. (Just a normal day in Seattle!) Across the Pacific, Vice President Al Gore descended on Japan and dumped a blast of hot air on the climate conference in Kyoto.

At least El Nino gets its job done. "Flexibility" was the theme of Gore's much ballyhooed flying visit, but sending Mr. Woodblock himself to demonstrate some bending to the winds of change was a calculated risk, and someone in the administration needs a new calculator.

In the old days of the notorious House Uo-American Activities Committee, bringing the United States into disrepute must have been a federal offense. Mr. Gore could be charged with this crime for his "flexibility without numbers" speech. The central theme of "the most important ever world climate conference" in Kyoto has turned out to be American intransigence over accepting curbs on its industrial gas emissions.

Cancer men
This expensive conference of 150 nations, lasting an unprecedented 10 days, appears to have turned into a struggle between what the environmentalists call the "dirty dozen" powerful companies and the rest of the world.

Greenpeace called a special news conference to attack the heavily funded industrial lobbyists "making billions of dollars from fossil fuels that are wrecking the planet's atmosphere." The familiar old names the Greens love to hate are still banded around - Exxon, Mobil, Shell, Ford - but the primary target is the less familiar Global Climate Coalition.

Despite a name which immediately suggests "green," the coalition has acquired the sinister aura of something run by Cancer Man from the X-Files. Sounding more like Smoke Stacks Plus, the organization is an umbrella for all of those oil companies - plus the main car, mining, chemicals, and steel companies - all fighting against climate clean-up. By sheer coincidence, the group ran a \$13 million advertising campaign in the US, just before the conference, to warn that reductions in gas emissions would cause catastrophic economic results for Americans.

This is the background to the wave of contempt for Gore's speech that sped through the conference environs. Cartoons of wooden puppets manipulated by oily dark hands popped up like spontaneous doodles.

Who, me?
American industry is virtually united in opposing any global warming agreement. It drives the message home with visions of millions of Americans without jobs and industries fleeing to Third World countries, which will ignore climate accords anyway. But the emerging nations in any

case have been excluded from emission-control accords, making the issue an even harder sell to Americans. In two years of talks before Kyoto, the poorer countries were exempted from suggested cutbacks, since the heavily industrialized North is historically and without dispute the main culprit.

This was the background to a unanimous US Senate resolution last summer that threatened to veto any agreement that did not include binding curbs on big developing countries like China and India. Since selfish national interest is not the prerogative of the US alone, China and India angrily reject any mandatory restrictions. In the middle, on the moral high ground, stand the Europeans. They led the world by starting the Industrial Revolution, and now want the lead in dealing with its consequences.

The British, as usual, prefer the American stance to that of their continental neighbors. Britain's deputy prime minister was alone in being effusive about Gore's speech. "Now I believe the flexibility and political will is there to reach an agreement," said John Prescott.

Even Gore himself sounded more modest about his feeble contribution: "I think it generated momentum." The sort of speech Gore made in Kyoto used to be called blue smoke and mirrors in memory of the antics of Victorian magicians: all rhetoric and loopholes.

Real reality
Today it is "virtual reality," the obvious cliché kindly provided by European Union Environment Commissioner Ritt Bjerregaard. The last minute momentum Gore modestly attributed to himself was inevitable anyway. A thousand tired journalists are waiting to pounce on this conference and savage it as a monstrous waste of time and money.

It seems the US cannot get away scot-free without making at least some minimal concession. Yesterday, a flurry of activity and juggling of figures was in progress, in an effort to come up with something. A possible fudge was suggested to lump the US along with Canada, Australia, and other "low emission" countries. The group could then agree to some minimal cut in their total contribution to destroying our atmosphere.

As Kyoto haggled over gas emission limits, El Nino paused for breath before the next onslaught. The big unanswered question amid the hundreds of thousands of words babbled in Kyoto was whether global warming is driving El Nino's shifts in weather patterns.

In southern California, a man shoveling mud from his house paused to tell a television reporter: "You know, I never believed all this El Nino stuff. Now I do. I'm going to show more interest in this greenhouse thing." Al Gore and Kyoto didn't open his eyes. El Nino in action did.

Column One



Thomas O'Dwyer

Apocalypse never?

Responding to post-Cold War realities, the US abandons plans for protracted nuclear wars

By R. JEFFREY SMITH

WASHINGTON - President Clinton last month issued new guidelines for the targeting of US nuclear weapons, jettisoning a Cold War dictum that the military must be prepared to win a protracted nuclear war that would devastate the globe, according to senior administration officials.

Clinton's new orders to the secretary of defense and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff require instead that the military aim its nuclear forces to deter the use of nuclear arms against US forces or allies simply by threatening a devastating response, and drop any planning for a long nuclear war, the officials said.

Clinton's highly classified directive replaces one signed by President Reagan in 1981 and marks the first time since the end of the Cold War that nuclear targeting guidance issued at the presidential level formally recognizes that no nation would emerge as the victor in a major nuclear exchange, the officials said.

But the directive nonetheless calls for US war planners to retain longstanding options for nuclear strikes against the military and civilian leadership and nuclear forces in Russia. Such planning reflects a widespread view among military officials in both nations that each side still poses a potential nuclear threat to the other - even though Washington has proposed to give Moscow \$242 million in foreign aid next year.

Several sources said the directive's language further allows targeters to broaden the list of sites that might be struck in the unlikely event of a nuclear exchange with China. In addition, the sources said, the directive contains language that would permit US nuclear strikes after enemy attacks using chemical or biological weapons, an idea that has been hotly debated by independent arms control experts.

CLINTON'S ACTION marks the first formal adjustment in 16 years of presidential policy for the targeting of US nuclear weapons, and could pave the way for further reductions in the total number of such weapons by requiring that fewer be held in reserve for a protracted war, several senior officials said.

But they added that the directive reflects more continuity than change in the military's effort to ensure that its strategic nuclear arms are ready to use at a moment's notice, an effort that costs an estimated \$33 billion annually.

The document affirms, for example, that the US will continue to rely on nuclear arms as a cornerstone of its national security for the "indefinite future," and that it will retain a triad of nuclear forces consisting of bombers, land-based missiles and submarine-based missiles, according to Robert G. Bell, a special assistant to the president and senior director for defense policy at the National Security Council.

Independent critics of US nuclear policy have suggested that Washington consider following the example of France, which gave up its vulnerable force of land-based strategic missiles, partly to save money and partly to undercut incentives for an enemy first-strike against such missiles. Both France and England rely solely on nuclear-equipped bombers and submarine weapons for deterrence.

Several sources said the presidential decision directive, known informally as a PDD, was prepared within an extraordinarily restricted circle of senior policymakers - numbering no more than two dozen people - from the National Security Council, the Defense Department, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the CIA, and the State Department, as well as the office of Vice President Al Gore.

The document sets only broad targeting policy and will be translated over the next 10

months into more concrete military requirements - such as preparations to strike specific targets - by the military staff of the Strategic Command (STRATCOM), headquartered in Omaha, Nebraska, the officials said.

They said the directive was principally drafted by the acting assistant secretary of defense for international security, Franklin Miller, a career official who has worked on nuclear weapons issues at the Pentagon since 1981. In preparing the document, policymakers did not consult officials at the Department of Energy - which designs and

occurred in Russia and elsewhere over the past seven years, "nuclear weapons now play a smaller role in our nuclear security strategy than at any point during the nuclear era."

Bell, who was reading from notes, said that "most notably the PDD removes from presidential guidance all previous references to being able to wage a nuclear war successfully or to prevail in a nuclear war.... The emphasis in this PDD is therefore on deterring nuclear wars or the use of nuclear weapons at any level, not fighting [with] them."

The policy shift that Bell highlighted involves one of the most controversial features of Reagan's 1981 directive, which the Pentagon summarized in a 1982 classified document as requiring that US nuclear forces "must prevail even under the condition of a prolonged war."

Many critics alleged then that preparing to fight such a war was ludicrous, given the certain destruction of US and Soviet societies in a modest nuclear exchange; they also predicted that the military would squander huge sums trying to develop weaponry and communications systems purportedly capable of outlasting such an exchange.

Partly to quiet the controversy, Reagan signed a joint statement with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev at a 1985 summit meeting pledging that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought." But Bell said that until now, US targeting policy did not reflect this rhetoric, because neither Reagan nor President Bush had sought to amend the secret presidential directive.

ANOTHER SENIOR administration official, who spoke on condition he not be named, said this policy shift is "significant" because it will enable the Pentagon to trim the number of nuclear weapons held in reserve for possible use after an initial nuclear exchange or two - a force estimated at more than 1,000 warheads, out of the roughly 8,000 nuclear weapons now deployed on US bomber aircraft and intercontinental-range ballistic missiles.

But Leon Sloss, a former Pentagon official who was the principal drafter of Reagan's directive, said that in his view, "removing the idea of prevailing [in a nuclear war]... does not change the substance very much" because winning "would have been nice, but it was never very realistic" and the ambition did not greatly affect what the Pentagon did.

"We were not in a position to prevail, even when we had 10,000 [deployed] nuclear weapons," Sloss said.

William Arkin, a nuclear expert who consults for various arms control groups, similarly called Clinton's policy shift superficial.

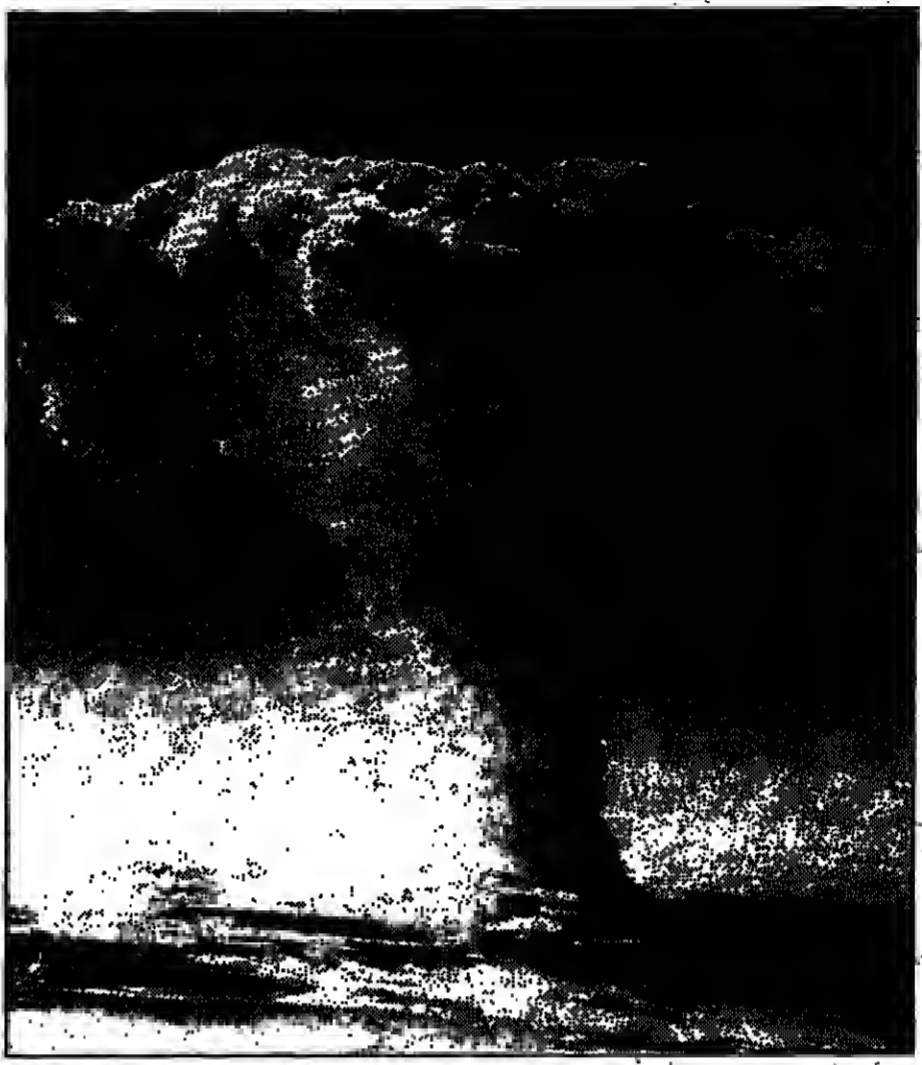
"In theory, this could free up a lot of resources and brain power that go into preparing to fight World War Four. But as long as we remain wedded to the option of taking out all of their strategic forces and nuclear command systems with a hair-trigger attack posture, then we really haven't adjusted to the post-Cold War period," he said.

Bell said the new directive did not alter a previous requirement that target planners must be prepared in a crisis to initiate various nuclear attack options, from initiating a major strike involving thousands of warheads to limited attacks involving a much smaller number of arms.

Since the late 1970s, for example, the military has had a special targeting plan for China that required US weapons to be held in reserve for possible strikes against Beijing's handful of strategic warheads, its leadership, its petroleum supply and its electrical power system. The aim of the plan was to ensure that China could not become the world's most powerful nation following a general nuclear war between Russia and the US.

Bell declined, however, to address a reported shift that would allow the military to plan attacks against a wider spectrum of targets in China, including the country's growing military-industrial complex and its improved conventional forces.

Another official said there was "no debate with respect to the targeting of China," even though Clinton, last month said, he told Chinese President Jiang Zemin that he wanted to "establish cooperation, not conflict, as the model for US-China relations in the 21st century." (Washington Post)



Despite the new directive, nuclear weapons are still needed to deter 'aggression and coercion' by threatening a response that 'would be certain and overwhelming and devastating,' says a special assistant to Clinton. (Israel Sam)

produces nuclear arms - and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, including ACDA's director, John D. Holm, whom Clinton has nominated to become undersecretary of state for arms control and international security matters.

Bell declined in an interview Friday to specify the length of the directive, the date it was signed or its formal title; he also declined to answer questions about the countries it names as targets of US nuclear arms.

He said that the secretive deliberations were warranted by their extreme sensitivity and that the administration had not planned to make a public statement about the directive or discuss it with foreign governments. He said the White House agreed to comment only because *The Washington Post* was preparing an article on the directive.

"THE PRESIDENTIAL directive describes in general fashion the purposes US nuclear weapons serve and provides broad guidance for military planners who prepare the actual operations plans and targeting plans for our nuclear forces," Bell said.

"It recognizes that [because] we're at the end of the Cold War" and many changes have

At the same time, Bell added, "it would be a mistake to think that nuclear weapons no longer matter, or that they no longer matter to this administration." Such weapons are still needed to deter "aggression and coercion" by threatening a response that "would be certain and overwhelming and devastating."

He noted that the directive still allows the US to launch its weapons after receiving warning of attack - but before incoming warheads detonate - and also to be the first to employ nuclear arms in a conflict.

The directive was prepared in part at the urging of Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. John Shalikashvili and Gen. Eugene Habiger, the STRATCOM commander, who told Clinton last February that the requirements of Reagan's directive could not be met if the US arsenal was reduced much below the ceiling of 3,000 to 3,500 weapons set by the 1993 START II treaty with Russia.

When Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin agreed the following month eventually to seek a new, lower ceiling of 2,000 to 2,500 weapons, the new guidance was already being drafted, Bell and other officials said.

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Environmentalists slam gas-emission cuts proposals

Kyoto conference ends today amid last-minute efforts for global pact

KYOTO, Japan (Reuters) — Environmentalists yesterday slammed a UN draft agreement on greenhouse gas emissions as full of loopholes and lacking in substance.

The chairman of the UN global warming conference, in a bid to bring nine days of talks closer to a conclusion today, yesterday announced proposals for cuts in greenhouse gas emissions by the world's main players.

"It's still full of loopholes... full of holes as a Swiss cheese," Bill Hare, climate policy director of Greenpeace International, told a news conference after the draft text was announced.

Tony Juniper, a spokesman for Friends of the Earth, said the plan does not protect future generations from the hazards of global change.

"Governments should be utterly ashamed," he said.

Among the items in the plan that the environmentalists found objectionable were the inclusion of three greenhouse gases instead of six, and the fact that it has virtually no provisions on how to insure that the protocol will be carried out in the event of noncompliance.

"There's a lack of a meaningful compliance, no consequences for a noncompliance... What is a 'legally binding pro-

tool' if there's no mechanism to ensure compliance?" asked Jennifer Morgan, a representative for Climate Action Network.

The text also did not mention a maximum limit for emissions trading, which would allow countries to freely emit greenhouse gases if they found a willing partner to trade with, the groups said.

"Besides, let me point out, transferring carbon from one place to another will not decrease the amount of [warming] gases," said Atiq Rahman, spokesman

for the Climate Action Network.

The environmentalists also were angered that some nations would be allowed to increase their emissions, which are thought to raise the planet's temperature and trigger natural disasters.

"It's outrageous that Norway and Australia, some of the world's richest countries, have been offered an increase... If this goes through, the credibility of the protocol will be at stake," said Juniper.

Negotiators from some 160 nations are working around the clock to come up with a binding agreement to limit greenhouse gases into the next century by the close of the 10-day climate conference today.

Mie Asaoka of Kiko Forum, an umbrella group of Japanese environmentalists, questioned why Japan's target level had been lowered to 4.5% from its original proposal of a cut of 5%, and chastised Japan for not doing more to achieve results as the host nation.

"It shows Japan's lack of leadership in bringing this conference to a success," she said.

Greenpeace's Hare said the proposal, which is based on emissions in 1990 and would have to be achieved on average between the years 2006 and 2010, would actually allow a 15% increase in greenhouse gases instead of a cut.

The environmentalists said the text was only a draft and urged negotiators to come up with a final text within the next 24 hours to save the planet from the disasters of global warming.

"Tonight will be the most important night for the history of the earth," said Adam Martam of the World Wildlife Fund.

CLIMATE SUMMIT

By PATRICK CHALMERS



Good-bye British tycoon Richard Branson waves good-bye as his giant balloon floats out of control over the Moroccan desert yesterday, after a freak gust of wind tore it free from its moorings. Branson was preparing for the launch of his round-the-world record bid. (AP)

Germans astir over military's hosting of neo-Nazi speaker

By FRONA FLECK

BONN (Reuters) — Germany's Jewish leader and the soldiers' association said yesterday they could hardly believe an elite military academy had invited a convicted neo-Nazi bomber to give a talk to officers without knowing who he was.

Manfred Roeder, who served eight years in jail for a racist bomb attack in 1982, was invited to speak in 1995 at the Hamburg academy on the subject of German resettlement of what was East Prussia before World War II.

The affair, which came to light over the past weekend, prompted Defense Minister Volker Ruehe to suspend a lieutenant-general, who headed the academy at the time, and order disciplinary proceedings against a colonel.

Ruehe said there was no indication that those responsible for inviting Roeder, a leading figure in the German neo-Nazi scene, were

aware of his background or views. But critics said this was not sufficient.

Colonel Bernhard Gertz, head of the German Army Association, said Ruehe had still not explained why one of the officers realized who Roeder was, why they should have wanted a talk on such a controversial subject and why it had been kept quiet for so long.

The leader of the Germany's Jewish community, Ignatz Bubis, said he could hardly believe officers could be so naive.

"This incident damages the Bundeswehr considerably more than the videos of a few uncontrolled recruits," Gertz said.

The army has recently been embarrassed by amateur videos of recruits singing neo-Nazi songs and surrounded by swastikas, or staging mock executions.

Ruehe has responded with a campaign to screen new recruits for neo-Nazi leanings and to

improve their political education.

"This case is particularly serious because it involves people who are responsible for training and for officers' political education," Bubis said. "You don't just invite speakers off the street without checking who they are first."

Col. Norbert Schwarzer, who invited Roeder, was alerted to speaker's background months later by someone who had amended the talk. But he failed to pass on the information to his superiors.

The talk was entitled "The settlement of ethnic Germans in Prussian capital, Koenigsberg is now Kaliningrad, a Russian enclave between Poland and the Baltic states."

The idea of resettling ethnic Germans from other parts of Russia there is close to the hearts of German nationalists and radical rightwingers, not least because the original German population was driven out at the end of the war.

The Defense Ministry also provided an army truck and two jeeps to transport tools to Koenigsberg in 1995 as part of Foreign Ministry-approved aid to a charity called the Deutsch-Russisches Gemeinschaftswerk (German-Russian Aid Society).

The incident compounded Ruehe's embarrassment this week when he had to confirm that officers had only discovered later that Roeder was a member of the charity, and that he had personally driven the truck through Poland.

Roeber, 68, a former lawyer who Ruehe described as "one of the most disgusting neo-Nazis," was jailed in 1982 for leading a group which carried out attacks on immigrant hostels, killing two Vietnamese and injuring several others. He was released in 1990.

The Defense Ministry is expected to deliver a written report to the parliamentary defense committee today with a fuller explanation.

China blasts Clinton-Wei meeting

By JUSTIN JIN

BEIJING (Reuters) — Beijing yesterday condemned US President Bill Clinton's meeting with Chinese dissident Wei Jingsheng in the White House.

"This act of the US side is totally wrong," Foreign Ministry spokesman Tang Guoqiang said,

commenting on Monday's meeting. "The Chinese side expresses its strong indignation and firm opposition to the meeting."

The 35-minute talks took place three weeks after Wei, 47, was released from a Chinese jail on medical parole and forced into exile in the US.

Speaking after the White House session, Wei said he had warned

the president not to be "deceived" by the authorities in Beijing.

At a news briefing in Beijing later yesterday, the spokesman called Wei a criminal. "Wei Jingsheng is a criminal who attempted to overthrow the Chinese government and endanger the state," Tang said.

"Whatever he says to attack the Chinese government and the Chinese people is no surprise and is not worth rebutting."

"We are opposed to US officials meeting Wei Jingsheng, opposed to the making use of Wei Jingsheng for anti-Chinese activities. The US government clearly knows the Chinese government's position."

Wei, who favors greater international pressure on Beijing to advance human rights and democracy, said he and Clinton had

vowed to maintain "close contact."

In an apparent effort to limit possible harm to the improving Sino-American ties, the White House did not immediately put out its own account of the session.

Instead of inviting the press to take photos of the meeting, Clinton's staff released a snapshot of its own.

The meeting took place outside the Oval Office, Wei's associates said, adding Clinton was accompanied by Sandy Berger, his national security adviser.

Wei, a political prisoner for all but six months of the past 18 years, was released on November 16 on medical grounds. His release took place two weeks after a state visit to the US by Chinese President Jiang Zemin.

North, South Korea open peace talks

By ALEXANDER G. HIGGINS

GENEVA (AP) — More than 44 years after the fighting stopped, the four main combatants in the Korean War held talks yesterday to replace an often fragile truce with a peace treaty.

The first day of the two-day session adjourned with little indication of progress.

"Ongoing," was the terse comment from North Korean delegation leader Kim Kye Gwan, when asked how the talks were going.

Other delegates, declining to comment as they emerged from a Geneva conference center.

Establishing peace on the Korean peninsula would play a major role in bringing world stability, the host Swiss government said in welcoming the North and South Korean, Chinese and US delegations.

"We hope this process will result in the progressive introduction of confidence-building measures on the Korean peninsula, with the ultimate aim of ending the 'no war-no peace' situation that has prevailed since the signing of the armistice in 1953," said Jakob Kellenberger, Swiss state secretary.

No one is expecting them to rush to a treaty, and some analysts are predicting the talks will last for years. But North Korea's agreement last month to join the talks to replace the armistice was seen as a breakthrough.

The Koreans sat at long, white tables opposite each other in the headquarters of the European Free Trade Association.

The United States and China were at tables on the other two sides of the square.

Tang Jixuan, Chinese vice foreign minister, urged North Korea and South Korea gradually to improve relations and build trust, but he said, better US-North Korean relations also were essential.

"The ship of the four-party talks has now set sail," said Tang. "We know for sure that the future course will still be long and difficult. Nevertheless, we have already struck a good beginning."

The Korean War began when more than 60,000 North Korean troops, armed by the Soviet Union, invaded the south on July 25, 1950. US forces were ordered in two days later as part of a UN force, which advanced across

North Korea in the coming months until the Chinese drove them back.

The ultimate goal of the talks is the peaceful reunification of the two countries divided since the end of World War II, but each of the countries is allowed to bring its special concerns.

The United States, for example, has been pressing the North Koreans for more information on more than 8,000 American servicemen still listed as missing in action.

US officials have said they particularly want to see whether they can learn anything about the missing servicemen by questioning four American soldiers who deserted their units in South Korea in the 1960s and are believed to be living in North Korea.

North Korea has rebuffed past US requests for the interviews, but has returned the remains of 209 Americans.

As part of the low-key approach, one of the sides formally briefed reporters before the talks. But the lack of any meetings scheduled beyond the first two days indicated the first talks concerned when they will meet again.

The agenda would be loose enough to allow each side to present its concerns, officials have said.

The Korean peninsula is one of the world's last potential flash points from the Cold War. The demilitarized zone separating the two Koreas remains a tense area that still sees military flareups and clashes.

Some 37,000 US troops are deployed in South Korea. President Bill Clinton cited the need to protect those forces from another North Korean invasion in refusing to sign the treaty to eliminate land mines in Canada last week.

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Racial tension in the melting pot down under

By KEVIN SULLIVAN

CABRAMATTA, Australia — Danh Ngoc Phung fled her native Vietnam by boat 20 years ago and eventually found her way to this busy suburb south of Sydney, where she opened a pharmacy and raised six children.

Now 65, she is a classic immigrant success story: She owns two pharmacies, two of her children are pharmacists, one is an architect, and three own small businesses. "It's been good for us here," she said.

Far too good for some Australians, who wish she would just go home.

Phung and other Asian immigrants are keenly aware that they are in the crosshairs of this country's divisive debate about race relations, immigration and the identity of a mainly European nation at the far end of Asia.

"I'm scared sometimes," Phung said, noting an increase in verbal and physical abuse of Asians in the last year. "But there's nothing I can do about it except remind my children not to go out at night — it's dangerous."

Since World War II, Australia has grown from a land of 7 million people of almost purely British and Irish descent into a multiracial melting pot of 18 million people, almost a quarter of them born overseas. The transition generally has been smooth, unmarked by the sporadic violence toward immigrants in parts of Europe and the US. But with unemployment now hovering around nine percent, some native-born Australians are convinced that immigrants are taking away their jobs and destroying their traditional way of life.

The government's "White Australia" immigration policy, which officially ended in 1973, required immigrants to be of European descent. Since then, Australia rapidly has become a society of immigrants from 150 nations in Latin America, Africa,



A resettlement project brought 2,000 refugees from Indo-China to Australian shores in the years preceding 1980, including this Vietnamese girl employed at a car production plant in Melbourne. Now Australia has the world's second largest Vietnamese community, which numbers 200,000.

(Australian Information Service)

the Middle East, the former Soviet states and many Asian nations.

Last year, almost 100,000 newcomers settled here, more than half of them from Asian countries and Pacific islands. Sydney has an ever-growing Chinatown, and outside the US, Australia has the world's largest community of Vietnamese, about 200,000 people.

Australia's changing makeup has been welcomed by many who see a new richness in the nation's culture, food and lifestyle. But some people feel uneasy watching comfortable old traditions such as cold ale and hot meat pies being replaced by Singha beer from Thailand and Vietnamese pho soup.

IT'S 10,000 miles from Sydney to London, Australia's former colo-

rial capital, and the distance has never seemed greater. Cultural and personal relations have thinned between Britain and its former colony, as it has vigorously fostered links with its Asian neighbors.

About 75% of Australia's exports now go to Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, China and other Asian nations.

Sensing its changing place in the world, Australia has chosen a decidedly more Asian tack in its economic and foreign policy. In terms of trade and security, Australia now pays closer attention to its 200 million neighbors in Indonesia than to its 3 million English-speaking cousins in New Zealand.

The changes have affected nearly everyone here, from the rising

number of scholarships and slots at public universities won by Asian students, to Chinese spoken on the streets of Sydney, to the ornate Balinese hardwood furniture that fills store windows.

But for some Australians, an increasingly vocal force, the changes seem a direct threat to their security and their children's future.

So when blunt-talking Pauline Hanson, a fish-and-chips shop owner, was elected to the federal Parliament in 1996, she was like lightning striking a parched forest. The ultraconservative Hanson's maiden speech in Parliament was an angry screed against immigration.

"I believe we are in danger of being swamped by Asians," she said. "They have their own culture

and religion, they form ghettos, and they do not assimilate." When Hanson started her One Nation political party, which claimed that Australia might soon be run by "multiracial lesbians," thousands of people turned out for rallies where she autographed posters that show her wrapped in the Australian flag, standing beneath a banner that proclaims "Pauline the Patriot, and her fellow patriots."

More angry than articulate, Hanson predictably drew support from extreme right-wingers, from biker gangs to groups linked to the Ku Klux Klan. But what startled most observers here was the hidden middle-class rage that Hanson seemed to have tapped. It was a kind of anger comparable in some ways to the paranoia that has fueled the American militia movement.

Hanson says Australia is being run by a "bunch of academic snobs" who "wouldn't know what a hard damn day's work is like." She worries that the United Nations is trying to take over the world. "She gives a lot of unhappy people someone to kick," said Phillip Adams, a prominent columnist and radio talk show host in Sydney.

"They're signing up with Pauline because their kids don't do what they tell them, because they've got weight problems, because their husband or wife doesn't love them anymore," Adams said. "They're there because other people seem smarter or prettier or richer than they are. We're looking at problems that require therapy rather than legislation."

Analysts here say Hanson's popularity has peaked, and polls indicate it is now around 4%. Hanson still travels with bodyguards and rarely gives media interviews. There have been threats of violence toward her, and there also has been an increase in abuse of Asians, largely attributed to the anti-foreigner feeling whipped up by Hanson's supporters.

HANSON IS still prominent in the public debate here, as she has been for more than a year. Ask any Australian about any topic, and the conversation seems to turn inevitably to Hanson, race relations and immigration questions.

Many Australians are clearly embarrassed. They fear she has set back the race debate by 40 years, to the days when another Australian legislator discussing Asian immigration uttered the notorious observation, "Two

Wongs don't make a white." Many here say Prime Minister John Howard is manipulating the immigration debate for political gain. It took Howard eight months to disavow Hanson's original speech in Parliament. Even then it was carefully qualified criticism, intended apparently not to offend Hanson's supporters. "It would be a serious mistake," Howard said, "to attack those who are attracted to her as bigoted, narrow-minded and racist. A few no doubt are. Most, however, are not."

Many political analysts fear Howard may further divide the nation along racial lines by not fully denouncing Hanson's positions on the Aborigines, who inhabited Australia before white settlers arrived. She said "red-blooded

Australians" were "fed up to the back teeth" with social welfare programs designed to correct two centuries of discrimination against the Aborigines.

Australia's highest courts have issued rulings in recent years giving Aborigines new land rights. Howard's government has proposed legislation to diminish the effect of those decisions. Parliament has been bitterly debating the issue, and it appears headed for an angry confrontation in the coming days. Some here worry that the issue could be divisive enough to cause Howard to dissolve Parliament and call early elections.

"We fear we'll have a federal election based on race, which will tear this country apart," said Adams, the columnist.

Polls here show that support for immigration is at an all-time low, mainly because people here believe that it costs jobs. Howard has responded to that sentiment, cutting next year's immigration quota by 8%, or a total of 20% since he took office in 1996, claiming that "there is a link between high unemployment and high immigration."

Most economic analysts disagree. They say many immigrants today tend to be creative entrepreneurs who start businesses and create jobs in places like Cabramatta. Crime rates and problems with drugs and gangs are more acute in this suburb than in most of Australia, but the Vietnamese community also produces some of Australia's top students, and first-generation immigrants who get their start here move out to more affluent areas.

Clare Khanh Dinhvu, who came to Australia two decades ago as a refugee from Vietnam and is now an optometrist with her own shop in Cabramatta, says she thinks Australia is "more racist now than it was 20 years ago."

"Right now we're the scapegoat, it's our turn," she said. "Twenty years down the road, it will be somebody else's turn." (Washington Post)

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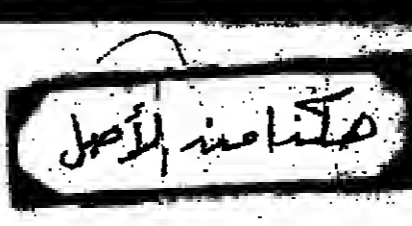
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Director Steven Spielberg on the set of 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind' (1977), which remains one of the most 'sober' movie treatments of UFOs

Aliens land in Hollywood

Most of the UFOs and extraterrestrials sighted lately on Earth have not come from far-away galaxies but from Hollywood studios, raising a serious dilemma for professional UFO investigators.

Some experts attending the Second World UFO Congress in Acapulco this past weekend argued that popular science-fiction films are welcome publicity for their cause. But others said the string of hit movies, like last summer's *Men in Black* and *Contact*, and television shows like *The X-Files*, should be scorned for reinforcing stereotypes and giving UFO debunkers more ammunition.

"Of course, everything helps, including

parodies like *Men in Black*," said Jaime Maussan, Mexico's top "ufologist" and organizer of the congress. It suggests to the masses that there really was a group called *Men in Black* that was connected to military intelligence.

Even *Independence Day*, the 1996 blockbuster about aliens bent on invading Earth and enslaving humans, helped to raise the number of people who say they believe in UFOs and that governments are covering up proof of their existence, he said.

The movie took advantage of the core beliefs of many UFO proponents: that in 1947 an alien spacecraft crashed near Roswell, New Mexico, and their bodies were recovered by the US military and

kept in the so-called Area 51 of a nearby base.

"It speaks to us about Roswell, about Area 51, that there were aliens recovered and that the president of the United States is not always informed," Maussan said. "All of this conditions human beings more and more to believe it is true."

Nuclear physicist Stanton Friedman called *Independence Day* "a hoo!" that he enjoyed for its special effects. He said nobody who went to see the film thought it was a documentary.

But others at the conference lambasted *Independence Day* as practically sacrilegious for exploiting the Roswell story.

Budd Hopkins, a leading investigator of

supposed alien abductions of earthlings, called it "a terrible movie." Robert Dean, a former soldier who claims to have seen "Cosmic Top Secret" NATO documents proving that many UFOs were actually alien space ships, said he preferred more sober classics like *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *The Day the Earth Stood Still*.

"I found *Independence Day* distracting because it is typical Hollywood," Dean said.

Dean said he and other UFO investigators have been working with producers, directors and writers in Hollywood to "tell the true story" about foreign visitors.

"The true story is much more incredible than any horror movie you could make," he said. (Reuters)

Sex and eroticism at the New Israeli Opera

By HELEN KAYE

The New Israeli Opera is celebrating a double centennial with two 20th-century operas, *The Emperor from Atlantis*, by the Czech-Jewish composer Viktor Ullmann, and *The Seven Deadly Sins*, the last collaboration between Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill.

The centennials are those of Ullmann and Brecht. Brecht and Weill wrote *The Seven Deadly Sins* in Paris, in 1933, on their way to America after fleeing Hitler's Germany. The opera tells the story of two sisters on a trek across America to earn money for their families. At each of seven stations, they meet up with one of the Sins, Brecht's oblique criticism of the "American Dream."

Anja Silja, one of this generation's great Wagnerian sopranos, is Anna I. Dancer Sally-Anne Friedland is her alter ego, Anna II, and the role is fantastic for me because it's dance drama, and that's the direction my work is taking. Anna II moves from inno-

cence to degradation, the stages

symbolized in the complete costume changes from wig to shoes

"Women have come a long way since 1933, but the gender contest is still alive. That sex and eroticism still sell is a powerful undercurrent in the opera."

This is Friedland's first starring role at the NIO, although her connection with the opera goes back to 1990 when she choreographed and danced in its first production of *Faust*. Since then she has choreographed the movement for, among others, *Idomeneo* and Yosef Tal's *Yosef*.

Friedland has been dancing and choreographing here since she immigrated from her native South Africa more than 20 years ago. Her latest work is *Puff*, a condensed version of last year's *Collections*. She did not do the choreography for *The Seven Deadly Sins* "but because I'm doing it there are changes. No one modern dancer works exactly the same as another."

Both operas were first mounted in Belgium by director Sabine Hartmannsheim, who's directing

it here. The designer is Bettina Neuhass and Friedland says that "the energy is fantastic" in this all-woman production.

Ullmann's *The Emperor from Atlantis* is about a tyrant who wants to conquer the world. Peter Kien's libretto doesn't mention Hitler by name. It doesn't have to, because the opera was written and almost performed in the Theresienstadt show camp.

Almost - because after seeing the dress rehearsal in September 1944, the Gestapo canceled its performance. Ullmann was gassed in Auschwitz a month later. The opera survived, however, and was performed at the Israel Festival in 1978 and at the Mann Auditorium in 1982.

Mendil Rodan conducted it in '78 and he is the conductor for both operas this time. The double bill opens on December 15.

Ticket holders will also be able to attend five free concerts of chamber music written in Theresienstadt, to be performed prior to the opera by members of the Group for New Music.



Anja Silja (left) plays Anna I, while Sally-Anne Friedland is her alter ego Anna II in 'The Seven Deadly Sins.' (Gadi Dagon)

How to survive in the classical-music jungle

By MICHAEL AJZENSTADT

Not many Israeli pianists give recitals in the Palestinian areas. But 21-year-old Saleem Abboud Ashkar will be playing in Ramallah and Bethlehem towards the end of the month. The Nazareth-born and -raised pianist who now studies at the Royal Academy of Music in London, is to perform works by Beethoven, Schumann and Chopin.

Ashkar says it is very important for him to play there. "There's a wonderful audience there, of course. The music is rather new for them, but they like it very much, and if 10 out of the 500 who attend each recital will then purchase a classical CD and start listening to this music at home, it

will be an immense success."

How do Palestinian audiences relate to Abboud Ashkar, an Israeli citizen?

"Look, we are the same people, it's just that history took us into two different ways. But I believe I'm starting a new tradition here and they are excited and very responsive. But it's not only Palestinians. Once a year I also play a recital in Nazareth where everybody is very supportive. It has become a tradition and it is always packed."

How did he become interested in classical music?

"Discovering young talent in general is not part of the Arab tradition. But I was lucky because my parents were very enthusiastic about art and culture," Abboud Ashkar explains.

"My mother always dreamed of playing the piano, so one day my father traded his pickup truck for a new immigrant's piano. So the piano was there in the house already when I was born. First I stood on it, then I just began making noise," he recalls. "But once I started playing in earnest I knew this is what I would do for life."

"My parents were very supportive but we were that kind of a family. For example, we all saved money so that we could go as a family to visit the Louvre in Paris."

"There were lots of records in the house so I grew up listening to Chopin. My father had discovered classical music when he studied at the Technion, and that was the music he heard most at home."

At 14 the pianist left home to complete his high-school studies

at the School for Arts and Sciences in Jerusalem. But at 18 he decided the time had come to leave Israel and study abroad, at least for a while.

"I felt it was time to leave mama's apron strings and try to be independent," Abboud Ashkar elaborates.

"The classical music world is a jungle where only the fittest survive and you need to learn how to survive. You cannot do it here, because in Israel this world is very protective."

"I love London very much as a city but at times it is so big it feels threatening," he adds. "When I'm in London I miss Israel but once I come to play and visit here I immediately miss London. Don't we always miss what we don't have?"

This March the eyes of the piano world will be on Tel Aviv for the Arthur Schnitger Master Piano competition, but Abboud Ashkar has chosen not to enter.

"Competitions are very important for the development of young pianists, and that includes losing. But the Rubinstein Competition is very dangerous for Israelis who are scrutinized for Israelis who wear magnifying glasses. So if I choose to enter this competition it will be when I am older and much more mature."

Saleem Abboud Ashkar plays the Schumann piano concerto with the Kibbutz Chamber Orchestra next week in Beit She'an (December 16), Ein Hashofet (December 17), Tel Aviv (December 20) and Dorot (December 21).

It takes two to tango

And it is the music of the people. Not of the high-brow bourgeoisie but of the streets.

Piazzolla's music can be heard on many of his own captivating recordings. And since Daniel Barenboim stepped out of his Wagner and Bruckner ivory tower to record Piazzolla a few years ago, many classical music performers have tried their luck with this great music as well.

The latest tango disc comes from renowned cellist Yo Yo Ma. *Soul of the Tango: The Music of Astor Piazzolla* (Sony SK 63122)

is one of the best Ma recordings I have heard in a long time. It is also one of the finest tango/Piazzolla discs to reach the market in recent years.

The tango is usually played on the bandoneon - the down-to-earth Argentinian accordion - and the piano, with some strings attached as background. But here Ma puts the cello in the forefront. Like the tango itself, the cello is the instrument of the people. It is the instrument with the most human voice. It sings, speaks and hums as no other instrument, mak-

ing it ideal for the tango.

For Ma, Piazzolla is as important as Bach or Dvorak, and the 10 Piazzolla tangos he plays take the listener on a beguiling journey to the heart and soul of Buenos Aires - its streets and cafes, its bars and grand ballrooms. It shifts from exotic to lyrical, from dramatic to caressing, and it creates a special ambience with bandoneon (the superb Nestor Marconi) and the other accompanying musicians. Ma's cello is warm, powerful and tender. Whether in relatively short pieces like the "Libertango"

or much longer ones like "Le Grand Tango" or "Cafe 1930," Ma captivates the listener and presents tango music in a unique combination that is both indigenous and classical.

The highlight is the combination in which Ma and Piazzolla play "Tango Remembrances" in tandem - or seem to. The technicians masterfully added two independent tracks, recorded 10 years apart, to create a wonderful duet. Yes, it takes two to tango, but who says they have to be there at the same time?

NEWS of the muse

Hark, the choral voices sing

The leading choral festival over Hanukka is the *Liturgica*, organized by the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, featuring masterpieces like Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and *St. Paul*, the Dvorak *Stabat Mater* and the Bach B minor mass, in tandem with concerts featuring sacred music traditions of the Jewish communities of Western Europe, the Balkans, Kurdistan and others. There are 17 concerts in Jerusalem, featuring such renowned international musicians as conductors Nicholas McGegan, Sergiu Comissiona and Yuri Achronovich, and singers Peter Schreier, Jorma Silvasti, Anat Efraty, Larisa Tenev and Susanna Poretzky, with choirs from Germany and Lithuania. Some of the visiting choirs will participate in Nazareth's *Liturgica* festival, which will also host performers from the last Abu Ghosh Choral Music Festival. The Haifa Holiday Festival (through December) will host local and visiting choirs in a series of concerts taking place in various churches in Haifa. Michael Ajzenstadt

Down Town Music all around the country

Saxophonist John Zorn and drummer Samu Bennett came to the Israel Festival a couple of years ago. These innovative, genre-creating jazz musicians are coming back as part of a winter-into-spring series called Down Town Music once a month for the next six, starting this month with drummer Bobby Previte. Others in the series include poet/guitarist Arto Lindsay, D.J. Spooky, an electronic dance guru, and musical iconoclast Elliott Sharp. They'll be playing at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, the Haifa Technion, and at Tel Aviv's Enav Center. The series costs NIS 60 per concert. Single tickets are NIS 80. Helen Kaye

Tel Aviv to host world-class pianists

Two of the world's leading pianists will present recitals in Israel over two days. Jerome Lowenthal will perform music by Bach, Rochberg, Scriabin, Prokofiev, Chopin and Liszt on January 2 at Independence Hall in Tel Aviv, where many chamber-music concerts used to take place in the first years of the state. This recital is a benefit event for the Rina Organization, which holds the annual piano master classes in Upper Galilee. Andras Schiff plays Bach's *Goldberg Variations* January 3 at the Mann Auditorium in Tel Aviv in an Israel Philharmonic Orchestra presentation. Michael Ajzenstadt

Youth orchestras visit Israel

The International Symphony Orchestra celebrates its fifth anniversary with a series of concerts at the end of the month in Israel. The orchestra, which comprises young musicians from all over the world who come to Israel for several weeks to hone their craft, will work this year with conductors Yasek Kaspeck and Marek Janowski. They will perform works by Dvorak, Richard Strauss, Mussorgsky, Bruckner, Schumann, Schubert and Beethoven, and the premiere of Oded Zehavi's *Even* ("Stone"), three Jerusalem songs for mezzo-soprano and orchestra with the captivating Edna Prochnik as soloist. Later in January the Jeunes Musicales World Orchestra visits Israel to perform, with the Young Israel Philharmonic, works by Mendelssohn (the violin concerto with young Karen Tanenbaum as soloist) and Tchaikovsky, as well as a premiere by Zvi Avnir. Michael Ajzenstadt

Curtain closes on Curtain Up

Young choreographers Inbal Pinto and Barak Marshall are among those whose dances will be featured at various world festivals next summer, as well as at Israel Weeks to honor the jubilee. They were among the 12 local choreographers whose premieres were featured at the recently concluded *Curtain Up: International Exposure* at Suzanne Dellal in Tel Aviv. The event, which played to packed houses over three weekends, also hosted 43 festival and cultural center managers representing eight European nations, Japan and Argentina.

Later this month the Kibbutz Dance Company will present Rami Be'er's *Aide Memoire* at the Dome theater in Marseilles before an audience of 8,000, which includes guest of honor Shimon Peres. The Marseilles municipality invited the KDC in honor of Israel's jubilee and David Ben-Gurion. Helen Kaye

NIO hidden to Baden-Baden

The New Israeli Opera will perform Omri Nitzan's wonderful version of Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore* from August 13 to 20 at the Baden-Baden Festival in 1999, as well as the composer's *Lucia di Lammermoor* directed by David Pountney scheduled at the NIO for next season. Both will be conducted by NIO musical director Asher Fisch. The NIO's partners will be the Metropolitan Opera, which is bringing Wagner's *Ring* cycle, and the Berlin Opera with an as yet unnamed Wagner piece.

Baden-Baden's is a new big-name music festival which starts in summer 1998 with performances by the Covent Garden and Kirov operas and a list of stellar musicians such as Jessye Norman, Carlo Maria Giulini, Vladimir Ashkenazy and Daniel Barenboim. Helen Kaye

Musical Nights of Autumn

at the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem

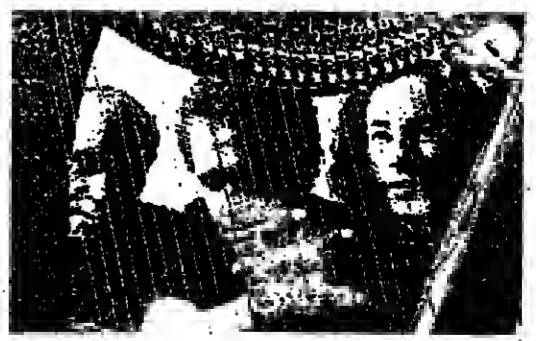
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The sitcom strategy

For 30 years, the Israeli political spectrum has been defined by a single question: what to do with territory gained in the Six Day War, particularly those parts whose majority population is Palestinian. Last week, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reported to US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on the cabinet decision to tackle the heart of the matter: defining Israel's minimal territorial requirements in a final-status agreement. Albright responded, in effect: "That's interesting. Just make sure you are done with this and defining a second redeployment when I return in 10 days." There is no excuse for such imperious impetuosity on the part of the United States. Israel is constantly being called upon to prove its "seriousness" in the peace process. Though late in coming, what could be more serious than a decision to define Israel's final-status requirements — a task of much greater fundamental importance than the arbitrary extent of an interim measure, the second redeployment?

True, Netanyahu should not have delayed so long in accepting Industry and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky's demand that Israel's final-status approach be defined before deciding on any further withdrawals. But now that Israel is embarked upon just such a landmark process, arguably the most serious task Israel has ever undertaken in the peace process, why has US impatience only grown?

The answer, it seems, is that the United States is coming to the conclusion that much of his own cabinet has come to, namely that quiet persuasion does not work with Netanyahu, only naked forms of pressure.

Netanyahu feeds this perception when he tries to juggle conflicting pressures by telling each side part of what it wants to hear. With his cabinet, Netanyahu emphasizes the conditionality of the second redeployment, allowing the right wing to support the withdrawal in principle on the assumption that the Palestinians will save the day by continuing to flout their commitments. With Albright, Netanyahu reportedly limited such conditionality to adherence to a Palestinian-Israeli "joint concept paper" on how to fight terrorism.

Netanyahu at times seems to be caught in a droll situation comedy, in which he is playing out different identities to different people in different places, leaving the audience watching in

anticipation of him slipping up and getting caught by one side or the other.

The real-world problem with this approach, of course, is that no one knows what to believe or what is real. It leaves Netanyahu exposed to a recent *New York Times* story egging Albright on to "call Netanyahu's bluff." And it leads to a situation in which the Palestinians can sit back and watch a United States that is increasingly willing to do their work for them.

The only way out of this predicament for Netanyahu is to cut a deal with his right wing that will end the sitcom strategy and make clear to all parties how Israel plans to move forward with the support of a solid cabinet majority. The recent unanimous cabinet decision to draw up plans for final-status talks and the second redeployment may have laid the groundwork for such a deal, but it was too vague and open to interpretation to constitute the deal itself.

The government should demand and receive from its four-minister "kitchenette" a "map of interests" for final-status talks, a proposal for a generous second redeployment, and greater specification of the outstanding Palestinian commitments that must be implemented before the second redeployment is carried out. Though ambiguity is much of the art of diplomacy, ambiguity can no longer be used to paper over conflicting interpretations of the same decision.

If the government adopts such a sufficiently unambiguous decision, the US should grant it the credit it deserves for committing itself to a workable route for the road ahead. A larger redeployment might grant Israel some political capital that would be useful in final-status talks, but the size of the redeployment is not the critical element of the package. A slightly smaller or larger redeployment is not likely to change the lines that will be drawn in a final-status agreement.

What matters in the decision ahead is whether the government convincingly adopts the logic of Likud leaders such as coalition head Meir Sheerit, who argues that he would rather his party, not the opposition, negotiate a territorial compromise with the Palestinians. Despite over 18 months in power, the Right has not shed its deer-in-the-headlights paralysis engendered by the Oslo Accords. If it wants to start leading events, it must decide what it wants, not just what it is against.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LIKUD USA
Sir. — As president of Likud USA, Inc. I am responding to "Sardit attacks anti-Rabin website" (November 11), regarding a purported Likud Internet site. Since the inception of my tenure in September 1996, I am completely unaware of any Internet site whatsoever maintained by Likud USA, Inc. We have never been informed of such a site nor have we been billed for such a site during this time period. It is unknown to us. If there has been such a website without our knowledge, and with the content described in your news item, then it is hereby completely disclaimed. It is not the view of

Likud USA, Inc. Moreover, let me state emphatically that Likud USA, Inc. regards the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin as one of the darkest moments in Jewish history. Likud USA, Inc. advocates the democratic process of ballots; there are no alternatives. We respect the rights of all to hold different views and opinions, and we unequivocally look to rational discourse as the determinative medium for establishing policy.
JOEL E. ABRAMSON,
President, Likud USA, Inc.
New York.

GROWING GAP
Sir. — The entire nation was crippled by a general strike, the leaders of which seem to have unlimited power to grind the country to a halt. Many of us have family outside Israel and never know when we might be notified to "Come...quickly!" We, however, were virtually trapped, unable to leave Israel. In the midst of this unthinkable situation, the prime minister flies to Europe! The distance between our elected officials and their electorate once again seems too big. I recall seeing former prime minister Shimon Peres, walking in a sea of bodyguards, looking over the carnage of one of the Jerusalem bus explosions and thinking—look at his protection, when ordinary citizens have been unable to travel by bus without risking being slaughtered. Something in the system seems very wrong.
SHOSHANA WEINSTEIN
Kfar Adumim.
SALA POSITION
Sir. — I was surprised that Yossi Beilin's "Grapes of Wrath model" (December 2), which dealt with a proposed withdrawal from Lebanon, did not mention the effect this might have on the South Lebanese Army, whose position is extremely complicated because of their relationship with Israel. Surely this question must also be dealt with before Israel can consider withdrawal.
TRUDY GEFEN
Kiryat Ono.
V.BLOOM
Amiad.

HISTORICAL INCITEMENT
Sir. — Prof. Asa Kasher, astonished by the results of an Israel Radio poll which probed the public's attitude toward political assassinations, quickly accused those who "support" political assassinations of being modern "idol worshippers...of Baal and Astarte," who care more for "land than for life." Amongst supporters of political assassination was none other than that great idealist, democrat and freedom fighter — Thomas Jefferson! Who would have believed that such a noble man could hold such radical, even anarchistic, ideas as, for example, that all forms of political power

are basically corrupt, that the common people have a healthy instinct as to what is best for them and that here are occasions when rebellion, accompanied by a little blood-letting, are not only justified but necessary! He expressed this theory most vividly when he proclaimed: "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants." Were he alive in Israel today, he would no doubt have been arrested and put on trial for incitement to murder!
TRUDY GEFEN
Kiryat Ono.

FROM OUR ARCHIVES
30 years ago: On December 10, 1947, *The Palestine Post* reported that Great Britain wanted to delay the arrival of the proposed UN Commission for Palestine until May 1948. Some 6,500 Americans, mainly with Jewish-sounding names, had volunteered to assist Jewish forces in Palestine. Two Jews and two Arabs were killed and many more wounded in Haifa, where a troop of the Arah Legion careered down Harbor Street in a military lorry, shooting wildly at passers-by. A Jew was killed and seven wounded, five of them seriously, while tracer bullets started fires in Haifa's Wadi Rushmieh. Four Jews were killed or burned alive by Arabs in their homes on the fringe of Salameh Village. In Tel Aviv two Jews were killed by fire opened at them by British soldiers after a Molotov cocktail was thrown by a member of the Stern gang into the turret of a British armored car. In Jerusalem convoys were arranged to carry passengers and supplies to the Old City three times daily. All movable goods were stolen from the Berman flour mill near the Yemin Moshe quarter. In Rehovot, Joseph Teitelbaum.

one of the Arabs' closest friends, was shot dead by armed highwaymen as he was driving towards a Beduin camp where he had hoped to find sanctuary. 25 years ago: On December 10, 1972, *The Palestine Post* reported that four Jews and 14 Arabs were in custody on suspicion of belonging to a Syrian espionage group. Two were later released for lack of evidence. Some of the accused were known to have had information of the ring's activities and of having failed to inform the authorities.
Alexander Zvielli

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TRUDY GEFEN
Kiryat Ono.



Mideast stall

Prime minister Yitzhak Rabin used to say that President Bill Clinton treated Israel better than any of his predecessors. And it's well known that Clinton and Rabin enjoyed a good relationship. But today — with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in charge — US-Israeli relations are badly strained. When Netanyahu came to the US recently, Clinton actually refused to meet with him. At one point, Clinton's jet sat on the runway of the Los Angeles airport, only about 100 yards away from that of the Israeli prime minister. When an Israeli diplomat asked an American official if the administration was sending a signal, the US official answered yes, the Israeli government had not moved swiftly enough on the peace process to satisfy Washington. The president was reportedly annoyed that when his administration asked Netanyahu to be more flexible on the peace process in order to shore up Arab support for Washington's Iraq policy, the Israeli prime minister dismissed the request. A few days after he left the United States, Netanyahu actually attacked Clinton for refusing to see him, saying that the president had insulted the Israeli people. The results of the public stand-off between Clinton and Netanyahu have been — not surprisingly — negative. According to an Israeli official, the Palestinians retreated on a concept paper for the airport for Gaza that they had previously agreed upon with Israel. In secret talks about the creation of a safe passage between the West Bank and Gaza, another understanding had almost been reached. But once the Palestinians saw that the US government was making its displeasure with Israel well known, the Palestinians backed off on this agreement, too. Meanwhile Arafat launched a full-fledged campaign at the United Nations to secure a seat for Palestine in the General Assembly. A coalition of Europeans and the

LALLY WEYMOUTH
United States has managed to hold off any action on this matter until this week. WHO'S TO BLAME? If the administration is putting too much pressure on Netanyahu, it's also fair to say that Netanyahu has left the American administration with little choice. The time has come for the Israeli prime minister to stop delaying and show that he's serious about the stalled peace process. The time has come for Netanyahu to stop delaying and show that he's serious about the stalled peace process.

Netanyahu describes as his "obligations in security matters." After all, the public position of the Israeli government is that there must be reciprocity on both sides in the peace process, not just unilateral concessions by Israel. The Palestinians' credo asserted wanted murderers or turn over to Israel some of those sought for acts of terror against Israeli citizens. If there is no progress, some US officials are threatening to intervene in the peace process. US representatives have actually mentioned the possibility of America outlinig its preferences for final status talks. Netanyahu's intransigence is disappointing. US officials claim, however, that Likud has accepted in principle the idea of a second redeployment — thanks to pressure from Albright in meetings held in the past two weeks in Europe. Washington would be a revolution of sorts inside the Likud party. Netanyahu has actually proposed a plan for territorial compromise that he labeled "Allon Plus." Currently, the security committee of the cabinet are said to be preparing a map that will outline the extent of the redeployment and the security zones that Israel hopes to keep in the final status talks — such as the Jordan Valley. The lines of this map will show — by implication — the outlines of a Palestinian state. Some elements of Likud, it seems, have come around to a more demanding version of Labor's plan. At some point Netanyahu must tackle the intransigent far Right in his own party if the peace process is going to move forward. No matter what, future negotiations will be difficult. After all, final status talks will include the most difficult issues for both sides — refugees, borders and the future of Jerusalem. So, don't look for tensions between the United States and Israel to evaporate overnight. (Washington Post)

War that never was

A faked intelligence report of Hafez Assad's plans is not enough to determine whether Israel's future holds war or peace, and cannot push the government into sending the IDF into battle. Israel is not trigger-happy and won't take the decision between peace and war on the basis of one report. This is why it is unreasonable to assume that Yehuda Gil's report of his purported conversation with a Syrian agent in Europe, while Gil was already under surveillance by the security services, would have started a war. It was a serious act that will damage the Mossad's good name and reliability, but it certainly shouldn't be given such fateful importance. It is a fact that on 17 September 1996, after the Mossad received the report from Gil's agent on Syria's intention to attack Israel, MK Shimon Peres addressed the Knesset and warned of a potential war with Syria. He advised Netanyahu: "Don't be a wizard of Net probability." He doesn't know. Nobody knows. Before the Yom Kippur War we didn't know either. I'm not saying that we should panic. I'm not trying to frighten anyone, but we mustn't go too far the other way. This is conclusive proof that the false report didn't alarm the government and wasn't accepted by everyone involved in assessing the security situation. Yehuda Gil was not alone at the time in predicting a Syrian war initiative, after Assad had lost patience with the stalemate in the diplomatic process. Professors and politicians have prophesized on the same line, arguing that war is imminent if the political deadlock continues. But Gil said the same, citing a Syrian agent who actually didn't exist anymore.

MOSHE ZAK
and analysis. An operator responsible for gathering information should not include his assessments in the same report. Secondly the connection to a foreign agent shouldn't be the exclusive responsibility of one operator. From time to time another operator should be sent over. If this rule had been kept it would have emerged in time that the source that Gil was reporting no longer existed. The seriousness of the failure shouldn't be underestimated because we must preserve the reliability of the Mossad, both in the eyes of foreign intelligence networks and internally. This is why ex-heads of the Mossad met this week and decided to act to lessen the damage to its good name, which is essential to support our claims of the dimensions of Iran's arm race in the field of weapons of mass destruction. We mustn't go too far and claim that Gil's reports could have caused a war, because this would give a mistaken impression of the ease with which Israel makes fateful decisions. Even though such things shouldn't happen, they happen in every intelligence agency, and have already happened to Israel. I remember two cases of misleading reporting which affected us indirectly. In the Second World War, the Germans dropped the Gauleiter of Mannheim near Ramla by parachute for a spying mission, using the false identity of a relation of a Jew in Jerusalem. Interrogated, he broke down and revealed the codes for his transmitter, which the British then used to send false information to the German command. Before the Suez campaign, the Egyptian embassy in London discovered hidden monitoring devices in their coded transmission room. Russian experts invited

by the Egyptians to dismantle the devices advised them to leave them alone and use them to send false information which would be picked up by British intelligence. Some embarrassing incidents at home may also be mentioned. At the time they were confidential, and only those from the first two decades of the state can be partially uncovered. The case of the Jerusalem engineer who before the foundation of the state passed information to Ben-Gurion and Sbaron about his conversations with a relative in Brussels, who was a senior Soviet official, Ben-Gurion recorded in his diary that the Soviet official had promised instructions for the manufacture of an explosive 50 times more powerful than TNT. Eventually it turned out that the information was false and the meetings had never taken place, but had been invented by the engineer to finance his trips to Europe. The case of the public figure in Tel Aviv whose codename was "Ezekiel." He reported conversations in Rome with undercover Soviet representatives. When suspicions emerged that the reports were fabricated he was followed on a trip to Rome. It turned out that at the time when he claimed in his report that he was meeting the Soviet representatives, he was actually on a shopping trip in the center of Rome. The war which the false information warned of a year ago never broke out, and neither will the war predicted by academics and politicians if the negotiations between Israel and Syria come to a standstill. Assad knows better than they do. He doesn't need to risk direct military confrontation with Israel as long he can profit by remote control from the war of attrition in Lebanon. The writer is a Jerusalem Post columnist.

Family planning

RUTHIE BLUM

Family planning takes on a whole new meaning when you live in Israel. Whereas you used to think of it as a concept relating to post-marital contraception, now you see it as a means for survival in a country which teaches you not to take anything for granted. Least of all those little amenities of daily life to which you have grown accustomed. "Just in case," you say, standing on line at the civil guard station to exchange your gas mask. Chances of Iraqi attack in the near future appear to be slim. What with the American administration breathing down Saddam's neck and all. But that's what you told yourself the last time...right before spending your evenings waiting for Nahman Shai to tell you to drink a glass of water. "Just in case," you sigh, pouring over wood-stove brochures. Chances of snow storms causing trees to knock down your electricity cables this winter appear to be slim. What with global warming and all. But that's what you told yourself the last time...right before spending your nights huddled around the flame under your coffee pot to keep from freezing to death. "Just in case," you whimper, calling your broker to tell him to sell your stock. Chances of your losing your life's savings after investing in "blue chips" appear to be slim. What with the US exchange having recovered and all. But that's what you told yourself the last time...right before witnessing the bank shares you'd bought with the money from the sale of your apartment plummet. "Just in case," you grumble, watching your mechanic install yet another burglar-proof gadget to your jalopy. Chances of it getting stolen now that it has four different safety devices appear to be slim. What with the police tak-

ing a special interest in vehicular theft and kidnapping that's what you told yourself the last time...right before your previous car was pinched in broad daylight, and your insurance company blamed you. "Just in case," you soothe, turning your baby-sitter a guided tour of the drawer where you keep the flashlight and candles. Chances of a blackout occurring appear to be slim. What with the "standing order" method of bill-payment you adopted and all. But that's what you told yourself the last time...right before your gas and phone lines were cut off due to computer error. "Just in case," you mutter, placing 47 bottles of mineral water into your shopping cart. Chances of war breaking out — as you'd already concluded — appear to be slim; as do chances of your water supply being cut off, due to lack of payment or computer error. Even chances of Merkot going on a wage-hike warpath in your neighborhood appear to be slim. What with you living in a big city and all. But that's what you told yourself the last time...right before sending your kids to their grandparents' house in Tiberias to take a shower. "Just in case," you shudder, withdrawing the money you don't have from the only bank machine within 10 kilometers which isn't flashing the "temporarily-unable-to-cough-up-cash" sign. Chances of there being a shekel-shortage tomorrow appear to be slim. What with Peretz and Neeman having duked it out to the finish and all. But that's what you told yourself the last time...right before searching for someone to accept a check to pay for cbeewing gum. "Just in case," you groan, outlining a complicated set of arrangements involving where each of your children would be dumped the following day — arrangements you'd carefully planned and revised according to news updates. Chances of the kindergartens, the grade schools, the junior and the high schools striking simultaneously appear to be slim. But that's what you told yourself the last time...right before seeing steam come out of your employer's ears when you left work at ten o'clock. The day after bringing your screaming toddler with you to the office. Family planning in this country is not about birth control. It is about environment control. You keep trying desperately to control your own little environment, while the forces of mayhem busily work to outsmart you. Just in case, you're caught unprepared. The writer is a Jerusalem Post columnist.

Handwritten signature: Ruthie Blum



Illustration from 'Yalda Meyuhedet' ('A Special Girl') by Einat Helman.

A special girl

From Aleph to Tav



By RUTHIE BLUM

YALDA MEYUHEDET ("A Special Girl") by Einat Helman. Illustrated by Christina Kadmon. Am Oved Publishers, Ltd. 1997. Price not stated. 21 pages. Target age: 4-8.

Though the focus of this book is a kindergarten-age girl with a hearing impairment, its message — that each of us has a unique set of traits, both physical and emotional — is universal.

Written in a sing-song rhyme scheme, the book opens with a description of the heroine as a girl just like any other the reader might know: "This is the story of a girl/ Whose name is Hila/ She lives in a nice, simple house/ With two parents and a brother/ She, like other children/ Has many games and many friends/ She has large, pretty eyes/ And beautiful, very long hair/ A charming girl, as many girls are — (Pretty, pleasant and very smart)"

It is not until the second page that Hila's deafness is mentioned.

"There's only one thing Hila doesn't understand/ Why she is different from the other children in the kindergarten/ Why it is that she is the only one among her friends/ Who has a pair of devices in her ears/ The answer she actually knows — It's because she does not hear/ Or in the language of grownups — Hila is what they call 'hearing impaired.'"

When Hila sadly asks why she is different, her mother points out that everybody is "different."



Illustration from 'Jerusalem Under Siege' by Galila Ron-Feder-Amir

For example, she explains, Adina — the Ethiopian girl in Hila's kindergarten — probably wonders why the other children have fairer skin than she; while Misha, the boy who came from Russia, cannot understand what the other children are saying; and Tali wears glasses, without which she would have trouble seeing.

"There are thin children and there are fat/ There are blabbermouths and bashful kids/ Some wear ponytails, earrings or braids/ There are children with all different kinds of names/ Some run fast/ And some are always late..."

Hila's mother not only helps her daughter grasp her difference in her impairment. She emphasizes other ways in which Hila is special:

"You know how to run, to sing and to dance/ And even to paint very well/ You know how to be a wonderful friend/ You play nicely, and when need be, you are helpful as well/ There are things which only you are capable of doing/ Because you are a

very special girl!" At the end of the book, Hila has a birthday party in the kindergarten. Surrounded by her friends, as she blows out the candles on her cake, she sees that she is "just like everybody, yet also special."

YERUSHALAYIM BEMAZOR ("Jerusalem Under Siege"). Book 1 in a new series entitled *Minheret Hazman* ("The Time Tunnel") by Galila Ron-Feder-Amir. Illustrated by Galia Berenstein. Modan Publishers, Ltd. 1997. Price not stated. 88 pages. Target age: 9-12.

THIS FIRST book of the author's new series is one of three recently published, with a fourth on the way. As in Ron-Feder-Amir's scores of other works for youth, each book in a series can be read separately.

Written in the first-person perspective of the main character, a 10-year-old boy named Dan, the book uses the adventures the hero encounters to give young readers a glimpse of their history. While sitting in a cave near his home in Jerusalem he's taken over where he can be alone and play, Dan has a peculiar experience. The back wall of his hideaway suddenly begins to crumble, revealing a circular opening. Too afraid to venture through the hole by himself, Dan enlists the help of his friend Sharon, a girl in his class. She is "even braver than the boys" and "knows how to keep a secret."

The two friends plan to meet on an afternoon when each has a different after-school activity to attend. This way, they will be able to explore without being missed by their parents. They set out with backpacks and some essential equipment: a flashlight, some rope, a video camera and snacks.

When they reach the cave, they begin to explore by crawling along dark passages, and by climbing through a strange opening in the ceiling of one of the chambers. Once through this opening, they discover barrels of rifles. Frightened by the sight, they decide to make a fast getaway.

Just then, however, they are discovered. "Password!" a young voice calls out to them. "Without the password, I'm going to have to tie you up!"

The owner of the voice appears, a boy dressed in strange khaki-colored clothing. When Dan and Sharon fail to provide the proper password, the boy ties their hands behind their backs, and then ties them to one another, and finally covers their faces. The two are led to a strange house, where they are met by a girl their age, and her father.

Dan and Sharon realize that their watches have stopped at exactly the same hour — the hour they entered the cave. It becomes apparent that they are still in Jerusalem. The only trouble is that they have gone back in time to the War of Independence.

There is, of course, a happy ending to the story: Sharon and Dan befriend their "captors," who are in danger from enemy fire, before finding their way back to the tunnel and returning home. When they exit the tunnel, they see that only a minute of real time has elapsed.

At the end of the book, the pair decide to try to locate the girl they had met, to see if she has survived the war. This they do by looking her up in the phone book and pretending that they need to interview her for a school project. The woman, now in her sixties, recalls the day on which Dan and Sharon had met her. But she has no memory of the two strangers from the future.



"It's very hard for my parents having two of their four grandchildren so far away," says Chavi Feldman, "so we try to take pictures or videos frequently and send them off through the computer."

To grandma @grandmacom.net

New technology is revolutionizing family ties. Some relatives find they communicate better on e-mail than face-to-face, Allison Kaplan Sommer writes

In the era of cable TV, McDonald's, Toys R Us, and catalog shopping, new immigrants to Israel can find nearly everything they left behind with one exception: family. While nothing can replace face-to-face contact, the pain of separation is increasingly being eased by technology.

For native Israelis, the Internet may be an interesting hobby or a useful information resource. But for many immigrants, the ability to send e-mail and instant computer images has become the glue that keeps families together when they are physically far apart.

Chavi and Yisrael Feldman of Jerusalem have put their computer to maximum use to stay in touch with their family in Toronto from the moment they arrived here three years ago. Today, in addition to written e-mail, they regularly send computer-ready snapshots and videotapes through their modem, usually of their two children, Nava, three, and Ezra, 21 months. "It's very hard for my parents having two of their four grandchildren so far away," says Chavi, "so we try to take pictures or videos frequently and send them off through the computer. My parents rely on the pictures to feel like they are in touch with the children. When they do see them, they don't have to say things like 'My, boy you've grown' because they see them on video so often." Feldman says her children are so used to the habit that they have become consummate professionals when it comes to performing for the camera. "Yesterday I gave them a bath and we taped the whole thing, giving them cues like 'Don't forget, Grandma's watching, give her a kiss!' They waved, they danced, they put on a show."

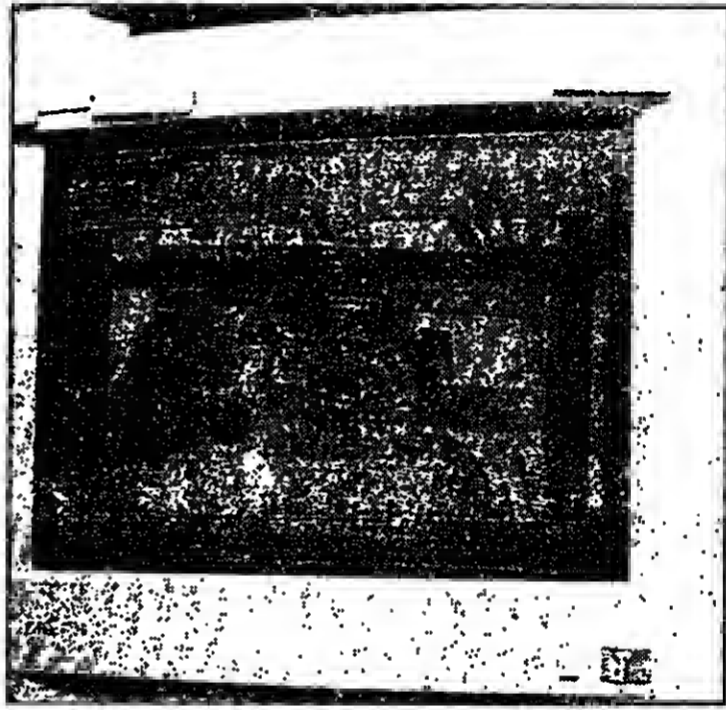
Baby Ezra has been rugging for the electronic camera since birth. He was born early, a few days before Chavi's parents had plane reservations to come to Israel. But that didn't stop them from experi-

encing the immediacy of his birth. "We took a picture of him five minutes after he was born. As soon as he could, Yisrael sent it through the computer to my parents. They printed it out and none of their friends in the US could believe that just a few hours after their grandson was born in Israel, they were able to proudly pull out a picture!"

Electronic communication has been an integral part of Rona Michelson's life for an entire decade. When Michelson, a Jerusalem marriage and family therapist, was still living in the US and studying for her graduate degree, her five children started moving to Israel one by one, beginning in 1984. By 1987, she was able to communicate with them through e-mail and through electronic "conversations" using the "talk" commands on university UNIX computers. This old-fashioned form of what today is called "chat," allowed each side to type one line at a time, then wait, and the other side would respond. The communication was vital — although sometimes the glitches were quite frustrating.

"My son got quite depressed in senior year in college — he really didn't know what he wanted to do with his life," said Michelson. "We would discuss his problems using the chat program." Her son had just written her a particularly troubling sentence about his emotional well-being when suddenly the telephone link disconnected. "I was so upset, I didn't know what to do. I thought my kid was about to commit suicide and I couldn't talk to him — I wanted to jump through the screen."

The intensity of the life she was living online sometimes led to embarrassing situations as well. "I was sitting in the university computer lab calmly reading e-mail from my daughter, when I came to the lines, 'I met this guy Moshie, he's very, very nice. We've been out a few times and if things go on this way, I think we'll probably get married.'" Unable to control her-



self, she exclaimed in the middle of the computer lab. "OH MY GOD!"

The computer connection became so important to Michelson that when her mother was in her final days in Philadelphia, while her children were in Israel, she packed up her large desktop computer and brought it to her mother's apartment. "My son asked me to do it. I knew I was going to go through my mother's funeral and the shiva. It was bizarre, but I felt that leaving the computer was like leaving my children, and I knew I really needed to communicate with them during that time."

She says that many families find they communicate better on e-mail than face to face. "You process things differently when you are writing than when you are speaking. Nobody hears your tone of voice — sarcasm, for example. You get to say what you need to say without being interrupted. And perhaps, most importantly, you have a chance to take things back. You can write something, look at it and realize that it might upset the other person, and change it. If you say something, then 'take it back' by saying you didn't mean it, it's pretty difficult for the person to forget they heard it in the first place."

In 1995, Michelson joined her children in Israel. The electronic connection overseas is now just as vital to her in the other direction. "I spend over half the year here, but

my husband is unable to come because he is the only relative of his 88-year-old father who is disabled and doesn't want to leave the US. During the time I am here, my husband and I write each other twice a day except Shabbat." She says they can preserve the sense of everyday conversations with the snappy comments they send back and forth. "While it's not the same thing as being together physically, we are with each other in a narrative and emotional way," she says.

One clear advantage of e-mail communication over the telephone is the ability to "speak" to a large group of people at once. This helps families who are flung all over the globe stay involved in each other's lives. Adina Hagege, a mother of three who lives in Zichron Ya'acov, and her sister Aliza Greenstone, a student at a women's seminary in Jerusalem, are members of an extended family which uses e-mail to keep in touch. Greenstone, 19, explains that their mother is one of four sisters who lived in different parts of the US. "When I was younger we used to try to hold a family reunion once a year, but as everyone grew up and moved all over, it became more and more difficult. So my aunt decided to start a newsletter." Eventually, a computer-savvy cousin put the newsletter on e-mail. All the family members send him their news and he sends it out to four generations of the family —

to more than 40 e-mail addresses every week.

Greenstone says that at her seminary, Michlala Njeveseret Yerushalayim, all the students keep in touch with their friends and families using e-mail. The only problem is logistical: there are only two computers at the seminary, so the students must sign up to book a time slot for on-line time.

Most people prefer communicating strictly through e-mail: writing a missive whenever it is convenient, sending it to another, who will read it and respond when he or she is able. Others, who prefer the immediacy of a back-and-forth conversation, will utilize various chat functions in the computer to have "real-time" talks with their friends and family. "I use America On Line's instant messenger quite a bit," says Reuben Taber of Jerusalem. "Essentially, you type back and forth with the other person. To find out if any of the people you want to communicate with are on line, you set up a 'Buddy List' and are notified if they are on line the same time you are. The first time I messaged my in-laws, they were astounded that I knew they were on line. I told them that if you are good with a computer, there is no end to the things you can do."

A year ago, Chavi and Yisrael Feldman were frequent users of the cutting-edge audio technology developed by the Israeli company Vocaltec, to have real-time voice conversations with their family in Canada. "It's a bit like talking on a walkie-talkie," Chavi says. "You say something, then you have to wait for the other side to receive it and answer." They rarely use it now, ever since competition was introduced on international phone calls and prices dropped dramatically. "The computer's great but I prefer the telephone," she says.

For some, all this electronic family togetherness can be too much, as one Tel Aviv resident, who begged to remain anonymous, confessed. ("It could cost me my head if this was printed with my name.")

"We often joke about the fact that our aliyah was not so much motivated by Zionism as by the desire to get as far away as possible from our parental units," he says. "But now with free e-mail services in the United States offering unlimited access, all that's changed. My mother-in-law writes every day — even when there is nothing to report. Do they have e-mail on Mars?"

Make room for big brother

argument. I know this is because the little one wants the attention he's used to and the big one wants to talk to us because he's not home most of the time. How can we satisfy both their needs and put an end to this constant fighting?

Jackie Goldman, M.S., guidance counselor, Ramah programs in Israel, says:

Your children are at different stages in their lives, and while it might appear that the older one doesn't need as much attention as the younger, the fact that he's away most of the time means that when he is home, he needs more attention than other kids his age normally would. At the same time, your younger son is used to being the focus of attention at home and when his brother arrives, he suddenly feels like he has to take the back seat. The most difficult time for anyone to make aliyah is the teen years. I

would bet your older son did not have an easy adjustment.

It could be that the fights are being fueled by feelings of jealousy of his younger brother's easier adjustment. He may be asking himself, How come he can do it and I can't?

What can you do to compensate for this situation?

What's missing when children don't live in the same house are common experiences — both positive and negative. Your boys don't have the opportunity to sit and watch a soccer game together on TV or to go out and shoot a few baskets in the afternoons. They don't have as much of a chance to develop a way to relate to one another.

You could try planning activities the family enjoys doing together — like hikes or trips — for the times your older son is home. The idea is to create a repertoire of common experiences for your boys. That's

not always easy when there is such an age difference, but sports or other outdoor activities can bridge that gap. You want to form an alliance between them, to develop some common area they can enjoy together.

Maybe on Fridays, when your 10-year-old comes home from school, his older brother can be a coach for his younger brother's soccer or baseball team. You can help your older son recognize that he has a vital purpose to serve within the family. I'm not talking so much about chores or household responsibilities but something that earns him respect like sharing something he's interested in — be it history or knowledge of computers — so you as parents become role models of wanting to learn from the older child.

At the same time, your younger son needs that as well so he doesn't

feel that during the time his brother is away he's important but as soon as the older one comes home, he's nobody. He's also old enough for you to be able to sit him down and explain to him that his older brother needs extra attention because he's not home much.

It would help if each brother understood that the other one is also vulnerable. The older one thinks the younger one is home all the time and gets all the attention and parenting, while the older one feels that as soon as the older one walks in, he's king and I'm dispensable.

If each could be helped to articulate his feelings to the other and to his parents, then each one can recognize the other's vulnerabilities and feel less threatened and perhaps even more empathic.

Other than that, have a lot of company over for Shabbat meals so they have less of a chance to fight!



By RUTH MASON

We made aliyah four years ago. Because of language difficulties, our 16-year-old son is away at school on an English-speaking program. When he comes home for Shabbat, he and his 10-year-old brother fight like cat and dog. The dinner table, which used to be a nice place with easy give-and-take, has turned into one long

Parenting

Corner



By Batsheva Mink and David Brauner

From garden to plate

Modern economics and lifestyles have made it impossible for the average family to hire a gardener to maintain a vegetable garden. If you want a gardener these days, you must marry one. A less drastic alternative is to do it yourself.

There are many good reasons to grow our own vegetables. Many of us may be tired of the run-of-the-mill vegetables offered by local food chains and markets. And the luxury crops are either unavailable or prohibitively expensive. Growing our own allows us a choice of new varieties or unusual crops, adding a new dimension to our home menus.

People are becoming increasingly concerned about the chemicals we eat. The artificial fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides and weed killers used in commercial growing affect the purity of the food we



Leora

The best reason for growing your own food is the sheer delight. There is nothing like the freshness and taste of home-grown, freshly picked vegetables.



eat. In your home garden, however, you can be sure your vegetables are organically grown because you use your own compost and natural pest controllers.

Economics is another major consideration. The cost of gardening for food remains relatively low, while the expense of buying food fluctuates daily and rises steadily from year to year. It is also worth remembering that fruits and vegetables are among the few things we can produce that the tax collector cannot touch.

By far, the principal input in all gardening, whether you're growing flowers or vegetables, is labor. But since tending your own garden is a labor of love and a hobby, it cannot be assigned a cost.

But perhaps the best reason for growing your own food is the sheer delight. There is nothing like the freshness and taste of home-grown, freshly picked vegetables. And the surplus of your produce makes fine and unusual gifts for family and friends.

OK, WE hear readers saying, that's the up side of vegetable gardening, but what about the practicalities? The cost of seeds, fertilizer and watering, the lack of space, the time needed to devote ourselves to anything more than a few borders and maybe a small lawn. True, growing vegetables involves investment and ongoing expenses, particularly water. However, many

cool-season crops like broccoli, asparagus and kohlrabi will get by with minimal watering while making the most of the winter rains.

This winter, the long-range forecast is for quite heavy rains. So it is worth buying five packets of seeds for approximately NIS 20. If you grow only six heads of lettuce, you recoup your investment in seeds; the rest will be free.

Granted, most people don't have time to grow even a significant portion of their own food. But even a modest contribution, a small supplement to our daily diets in the form of a few garden-grown herbs or cherry tomatoes, is worth the grower's while.

Even if you can find the time, you may think you cannot find the space. But a plot of 3m. x 3m. is more than sufficient for a nice vegetable patch. And a certain amount of gardening for food can be done in containers.

You don't have to give up the idea of home-grown vegetables simply because you don't have enough room to grow a complete kitchen garden. In fact, you can combine a flower and vegetable garden in the same plot or devote a small corner of the flower garden to growing vegetables.

Flowers and food have historically been grown separately, primarily for aesthetic reasons. Flower gardeners prefer odd-shaped beds and long borders, while vegetables often need a

larger piece of land and must be grown in rows. Also, as they mature, many common vegetables look dull, untidy or even ugly. As an example, there is nothing more unsightly than the yellow, shriveled leaves of a row of sprouting broccoli late in the season.

But when there is not enough space for two separate gardens, there is no practical reason not to plant both.

VEGETABLES can, in fact, be very decorative. It is worth remembering that "vegetable" is only a word which, incidentally, the US Supreme Court defined in an 1893 decision as a plant generally eaten during the main course of a meal. In gardening terms, vegetable plants can contribute as much beauty to a garden as any other ornamental plant.

No law says vegetables have to be grown in straight rows. In Europe, vegetable plants are often grown in borders, where their handsome foliage and often splendid fruits give gardens a unique

look. Vegetable gardens have a tendency to be relegated to a miserable patch tucked away in some out-of-the-way corner. Not only does one miss out on the joy of watching one's food grow and mature, but it can be annoying to have to trek to the back of the garden in hot or wet weather to pull a few carrots or pick some herbs.

So why not grow vegetables as visibly and conveniently as flowers, with flowers or even instead of flowers? What can be more spectacular than a line of brilliant runner beans with their scarlet flowers? Even the carrot, with its fernlike leaves, can be interesting.

Vegetable growing is more an applied hobby than flower gardening because the results of the gardener's labor and skill are constantly being tested in the eating of the produce. There is a certain degree of physical labor involved, but the exercise is healthful, especially for people who work at sedentary jobs.

The kitchen garden provides pleasant physical exercise for any

amount of time one can spare. The pace is set by a spade or fork rather than a lawn mower.

And the time spent working is interesting. Watching something grow from a seed or a piece of horseradish peel you planted puts extra flavor into the produce that finds its way from your garden or containers onto your family's plates.

This is the first of a series of articles on vegetable gardening. In the coming weeks we will help you choose which vegetables to grow and describe in detail how to grow them.

Your gardening questions and comments are welcome. Contact Batsheva Mink, P.O.B. 3943, Jerusalem 91039, or David Brauner, e-mail: morrir@mail.biu.ac.il

Heads 'N' Tails



By D'vora Ben Shaul

A few years ago a young girl called me late one evening in something of a panic. She had been playing with her three-month-old puppy. They were tugging back and forth on a piece of towel when to her dismay one of the puppy's teeth fell out. She was sure she had played too roughly and that she had maimed her pet for life.

I was able to reassure her that there was no cause for alarm because the tooth that came out

was simply a milk tooth that was loose and ready to fall out by itself. But most people are not aware that kittens and puppies do shed their milk teeth. This is understandable because young carnivores are not like young humans or, for that matter, other young primates such as chimpanzees and monkeys.

We are all familiar with the sight of a young child with a gap in the front teeth where a milk tooth has fallen out and where the permanent tooth has not yet emerged. In young carnivores the process is somewhat faster and the original milk tooth or "baby tooth" usually doesn't fall out

until it is quite literally pushed out by the emerging permanent tooth. Therefore while the new tooth may be a bit shorter for a few days it is quickly in place and the loss of the milk tooth is not usually noticed. The reason for this is obvious. Teeth are an animal's main means of survival: being without them would impose hardship. Nature has accommodated them. Unlike humans, the dog or cat really needs those vital teeth to get enough nourishment. While we humans can and do adapt to chewing on one side for short periods, cats and dogs don't do too well in that respect. That is

why old dogs, whose teeth are no longer in good shape, usually suffer from malnutrition unless great care is taken when feeding them.

Puppies, kittens and wild animals like foxes, jackals and wolves all go through a teething process that is marked by gnawing at almost everything they encounter. Slippers and shoes are often the favorite objects.

As any dog owner knows, this behavior diminishes as the animal grows older. This is due, in part, to the fact that the animal no longer needs to chew on things so much after teething is complete. In nature, animals

gnaw sticks and stones, and in farming areas plastic irrigation pipes have become a favorite for foxes and other wild animals.

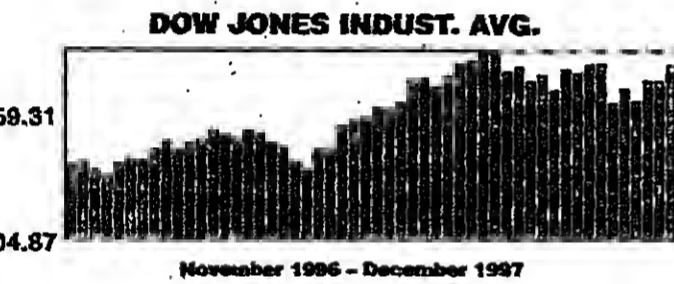
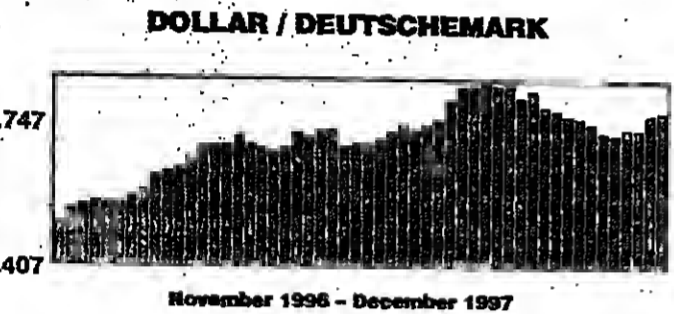
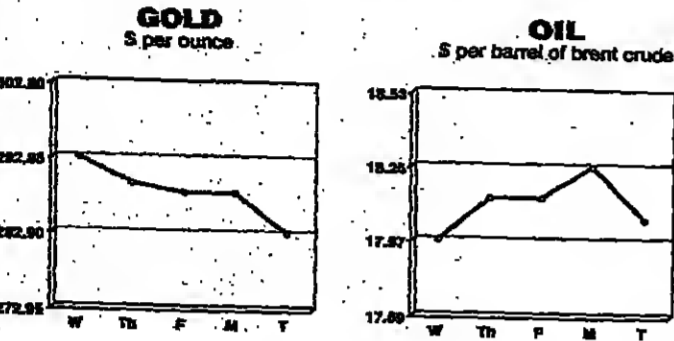
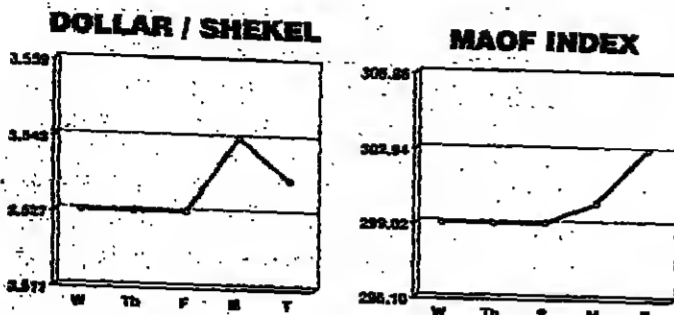
As for the teething puppy at home, the best approach is to give it a number of things that it is permitted to gnaw and keep the rest out of reach for the first year. Scolding isn't going to do much good and only makes the animal - and sometimes the owner - miserable. Old pieces of blanket or towel, old slippers, etc., are all excellent chew toys. A word of caution: avoid anything made of foam rubber or other materials that can be chewed up and swallowed with harmful results.



Justi, iolito

MARKETS

in brief



Hotel Association sets up VIP room bank

In the face of the crisis in the tourism industry, the Hotel Association has established a room bank to provide accommodation for visiting travel agents, journalists and decision makers visiting the country as guests of the Tourism Ministry, El Al or tour organizers, the association announced yesterday. So far the hotels have contributed some 8,500 rooms, representing a total value of about \$1 million. Some 1,800 rooms have already been used. By the end of 1998, about 2,500 such guests are due to visit the country. *Haim Shapiro*

Sharon stops dismissals of Dimona rail workers

National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon has instructed Israel Railways director-general Amos Uzumi not to go ahead with the dismissals of railway employees in Dimona. Sharon said he cannot accept dismissals of workers in the Negev and particularly in development towns, due to the lack of employment opportunities in the area. Sharon informed Dimona Mayor Gabi Lalouch that he would not permit the firing of the railway employees, who had been striking since November 26. *Sybil Ehrlich*

Sharansky: Invest in competitive firms

By DAVID HARRIS

The Investments Center of the Industry and Trade Ministry may refuse to issue grants to textile companies if they are in financial difficulties, center director David Baruch said yesterday, after Industry and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky told the center to concentrate investments in more financially competitive industries. In the coming days the center will reexamine its grants policy as it considers grant applications

from two textile firms. In recent years the center gave some NIS 45 million to Gibor Sabrina Textile Industries and Kitan Consolidated, the former last week filed for bankruptcy and the latter laid off 250 workers. One of the key aims in 1998 will be to encourage investment in localities whose textile industry is in dire straits, but not necessarily to invest in that sector, said Baruch. Sharansky said he will ask the cabinet to discuss the currency

exchange rate with a view to encouraging exports and preventing the closure of more factories. Encouraging exports would lead to renewed economic growth and a reduction in unemployment in development areas. However, added Sharansky, in the mid-to long-term the country must move away from low-profit industries and into those where it will be possible to compete more easily. The Knesset Labor and Social Affairs and Economics committees held a joint emergency meet-

ing yesterday to discuss the Gibor Sabrina bankruptcy and the 250 redundancies announced by Kitan. Kitan executives told the MKs there is no way they can reverse their decision, which was the result of cheaper competition from the Far East. Labor and Social Affairs Committee chairman Maxim Levy suggested giving Kitan the unemployment benefits of those just laid off and asking the managers to produce a rescue package within three months. Today the com-

mittee is to debate proposals for preventing the Kitan dismissals. Labor Party chairman Ehud Barak visited the company's Upper Nazareth factory yesterday, where he blamed the government for the firm's demise. "The government is responsible for a place such as Upper Nazareth and mustn't allow the factory to close until there are others to replace it, say in tourism," said Barak. "I've come here as an individual and not as a politician," he added.

Japan to unveil \$77b. rescue plan for banks

TOKYO - Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto intends using \$77 billion of government money to bolster the nation's banks, he said yesterday. Hashimoto yesterday directed his Liberal Democratic Party to consider a plan to sell 10 trillion yen (\$77b.) in government bonds to raise funds that could be used to buy bank shares or promote mergers. The move sent the benchmark stock index surging almost 3.5 percent and bonds tumbling to their biggest loss in five months.

"This is a turning point in government policy," said Yasuo Ueki, general manager of equity operations at Nikko Securities Co. "Financial issues have been sold pretty heavily, and this will bring investors back."

While Hashimoto may have cheered investors, his decision to use government funds could signal he's ready to slow down his "Big Bang" market reforms, which call for a diminished government role in the financial industry, analysts said.

"Hashimoto's done an about-face if he thinks buying bank shares is a good idea because the Big Bang is about increasing free competition and letting the weak banks fail," said Kaoru Fujimura, an economist at Asahi Mutual Life Insurance Co.

Yet concern over the health of the financial system mounted in the last month, with the collapse of Yamaichi Securities Co., the nation's fourth-largest brokerage house, Hokkaido Tokushoku Bank Ltd., a major lender, and Sanyo Securities Co., one of the 10 biggest brokers. That concern was enough to drive Hashimoto's approval rating down to 35% last week, its lowest since he became prime minister almost two years ago, according to the *Nihon Keizai* newspaper.

Details of the plan being considered by the ruling party will become clearer Friday, when the LDP releases an outline of its measures to support the financial industry. Yet media reports that Hashimoto was willing to endorse a new government package were enough to send the benchmark Nikkei 225 stock average up 554.94 points, or 3.4%, to 16,686.51. "This is obviously a shift in gov-



Currency dealers bid orders yesterday in Tokyo while a Japanese yen-US dollar currency rate indicator flashes behind them. On the Tokyo foreign exchange, the dollar was slightly lower amid concerns about possible central bank intervention to support the yen. (AP)

ernment policy toward addressing uneasiness about the financial system," said Yasuhiro Nakazawa, who helps manage \$ trillion yen as a director at Daiwa Investment Trust & Management.

Bonds fell on concern that a wave of new bonds could further weigh on prices of debt that's already issued. Ten trillion yen in new bonds would amount to 60% of the new debt the government planned to issue this year.

Hashimoto directed his party to consider a plan devised by a political rival, Seiroku Kajiyama, a senior LDP official. Earlier this month, Kajiyama proposed selling some shares the government holds in Japan Tobacco Inc. and Nippon Telegraph & Telephone Corp. He said it could use the proceeds as collateral for the sale of a new type of bond earmarked for reform

and development projects during the next 10 years.

Kajiyama said the money could be used to buy preferred shares of banks through the government-run Deposit Insurance Corp., injecting the companies with new funds to write off the more than 28 trillion yen in defaulted loans left on their books from the collapse of the real estate market this decade.

Kajiyama also suggested the Finance Ministry postpone adopting tougher rules for banks to evaluate their bad loans. Those rules, to take effect April 1, prompted the banks to write off trillions of yen in bad loans this year, forcing most major lenders to forecast losses for the year ending March 31. Kajiyama will meet with the LDP's Financial Stabilization Committee today. By selling stock, the govern-

ment might avoid increasing Japan's deficit, though some analysts said the measure would end up costing the government just the same.

The deficit is expected to rise by 5.4% of gross domestic product in the year to March 1998. That's the second highest among industrial nations after Italy. Hashimoto said last year that reducing the budget deficit was his administration's top priority.

Finance Minister Hiroshi Mizusaka backed the plan to sell bonds, and Economic Planning Agency chief Koji Oni said the government should be "flexible" in pursuing its goal to stop selling deficit-financing bonds by March 2004.

"The chance of the government taking effective steps is getting better," said Shigeru Kurabe, who

helps manage 329 billion yen as assistant manager of the equity portfolio department at Taiheiyō Investment Trust & Management Co.

Those "effective steps" won't include a free ride for all banks, analysts said. Many insisted the government would face stiff opposition if it tries to prop up all banks. Though Kajiyama and the LDP haven't specified which banks' preferred shares should be bought, analysts said the government should go no further than buying preferred shares of banks that agree to merge with weaker competitors.

"Any move by the LDP to bail out healthy banks would be seen as completely anti-capitalist," said Shigenori Okazaki, a political analyst at SBC Warburg (Japan) Ltd. (Bloomberg)

Treasury to reexamine property-tax reform

By DAVID HARRIS

Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman will investigate property-tax reforms as soon as the state budget is passed, he said yesterday.

This is the second time the subject has been discussed this year, having been largely rejected under former finance minister Dan Meridor.

The Treasury legal department yesterday officially handed Neeman the final version of the Gabbai committee report on property tax. It took the committee some eight months to complete its work, having handed its interim report to the Treasury in April.

The additional material was purely academic, with the key recommendations unchanged: • The abolition of property tax, currently payable at 2.5 percent annually, which last year brought NIS 954 million into the Treasury coffers.

• The introduction of a sales tax on buildings and land used for business purposes at a rate of

2.5%, with a taxable value of NIS 23 billion, raising an estimated NIS 575m. annually.

• The introduction of a 1% sales tax on newly built apartments, with a taxable value of NIS 22b., raising approximately NIS 220m. each year.

The existing tax is seen by all concerned as outdated, particularly since the 2.5% annual rate is some three times higher than the standard rate worldwide.

However, there is no cross-the-board agreement to the Gabbai proposals. When they were first revealed in April, Meridor let it be known he was dissatisfied. His stance was largely based on the opinion of Income Tax Commissioner Doron Levy.

The proposed replacement of the property tax with a business sales tax would create a NIS 150m. shortfall in state revenues, according to Levy.

The Gabbai report was warmly received by then deputy finance minister David Magen.

"There's been no feedback yet from the Treasury," committee chairman and former state budget director Yoram Gabbai said yesterday. "Neeman will have to make up his own mind."

While welcoming Neeman's decision to look at the issue early next year, there is concern among committee members that he will incorporate the proposals into a wider tax reform package.

"It is always tactically better to do things on a micro- rather than macro-scale," said one source close to the committee. "It is usually very problematic to implement a whole series of reforms in one fell swoop."

Neeman yesterday instructed his senior staff to examine the Gabbai recommendations in detail.

Ravitz threatens veto of arrangement bill over drugs

By JUDY SIEGEL

Knesset Finance Committee chairman Avraham Ravitz declared yesterday that he would not allow the arrangements bill to pass unless the Treasury agrees to cover the cost of 14 vital drugs not included in the basket of health services. Ravitz asked the Health Ministry to find a solution to the problem of the medications.

In addition, Foreign Minister David Levy told Israel Radio that "this government has no justification for existence" unless those suffering from cancer, AIDS, schizophrenia, diabetes, and other serious illnesses get the medications they need from their health fund.

Levy promised to press the government to adopt these views, which have been voiced consistently by Health Minister Yehoshua Matza.

Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman is determined to get the

arrangements bill, amending the budget, passed before January 1, but Ravitz's personal veto will make this impossible unless he bends on the medications.

But even if he agrees to allocate over NIS 120 million for the medications, he won't have an easy time getting through the medical aspects of the bill, which would in effect abrogate the egalitarian, three-year-old National Health Insurance Law and allow the health funds to charge members substantial fees beyond health taxes on their income.

Appearing at the Finance Committee's heated discussion yesterday, in which nearly all speakers attacked the Treasury's policies, Haim Pelis, the Finance Ministry's deputy budget chief, declined to say whether the Treasury would allocate extra funds to cover the cost of the medications. "I am sure that the Health Ministry and the Health Fund will reach a proper settlement."

Matza said he "felt uncomfortable" representing the government on these issues. "I voted against the arrangements bill in the cabinet, and I don't know how I could vote for the budget with these inclusions."

Matza said the government has reached a crucial fork in the road, and will have to decide whether it wants a two-tier health system for the rich and for the poor, or to continue with an egalitarian system in which all residents are entitled to a basic basket of services subsidized by the government.

Ariella Ravdel, director of the Israel Consumer Council, told the committee that the bill "violates basic principles and norms of consumer legislation based on a balance between the interests of strong suppliers versus weak customers."

Emptying out the mandatory basket of health services, she said, will mean that "in exchange for health taxes, citizens will get an undefined product at an unknown price."

El Al, Air France in link-up talks

By HAIM SHAPIRO

El Al is to begin negotiations with Air France for a code-sharing agreement for flights between Tel Aviv and Paris. El Al spokesman Nachman Klieman said yesterday.

The result of such negotiations would be a new schedule with alternating flights by the two companies. However, the flights of both companies would be listed as both El Al and Air France flights and would include passengers of both airlines.

Klieman said that the negotiations are the result of a chance meeting and discussion between El Al director-general Yoel Feldschuh and an Air France official at the annual meeting of the International Air Transport Association in Amman a few months ago.

The two airlines are to assign committees to work together for commercial cooperation as well as code-sharing, Klieman said. However, he added that the

perceived agreement fell short of a strategic alliance. He said that the benefit to the passengers would be that they would be able to fly to destinations not served by El Al, such as South America and Japan with better connection times. For the company, he said, the advantage lay in being able to offer customers a wider range of services.

In the past, El Al has held talks with American Airlines over the possibility of a code-sharing agreement, but so far there have been no concrete results. Air France is the first European airline with which El Al has had such talks.

Until recently, Air France had been reporting that its Paris-Tel Aviv route was losing money, a factor which has become increasingly critical as the company moved from public to private ownership. Air France already has code-sharing agreements with several airlines, including CSA, the Czech national airline, and Austrian Airlines.

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THE BUSINESS SCENE

By GRUOR LAW CASLINA

Not a political commentary

A completely apolitical (well, nearly) analysis of the economics behind the Histadrut strike and the British government's proposal to redefine tax-free savings plans

By NEIL COHEN

Believe what you will, the strike we were forced to endure, and is thankfully over, was about fear and power, not public-sector wages or pensions. But this isn't a political commentary column.

It is just ironic that policymakers and ordinary citizens worldwide are grappling with the thorny problem of how to pay for ever lengthening, ever costlier retirements. We are living longer and demanding more. This is putting immense strain on two sets of resources, health-care budgets and pension funds.

In this country, most people's pensions have been funded by pooled pension funds. You and your employer pay x percent of your salary each month. When you reach the standard retirement age, provided that you have worked your full complement of years, you are entitled to a fixed pension sum, usually inflation-linked, per month for the rest of your life. The usual calculation was that you needed to work 35 years to accumulate full pension rights, accumulating 2% per annum, such that by retirement you would be entitled to a pension equal to 70% of your wage.

Histadrut funds managed to make a number of unwise investments. Far more problematic, though, was the Histadrut's actuarial miscalculation - that it could continue to pay out based on outdated life expectancies without requiring greater contributions from its members. So people continued to contribute at old rates, while pensioners were living longer.

At the same time, the government was cutting back on the quota of special bonds it was issuing to the pension funds. Income was dropping, while future liabilities were mounting up. It became evident that some of the smaller union funds, which were attracting few new members who were to fund ongoing and future payments, were soon going to run out of money.

The previous government reached an agreement with the Histadrut whereby pensioners would have the pensions promised them, underwritten by the government, regardless of the state of their funds. Existing members who had not yet retired would have minimum levels of return underwritten by the government (though not as much as members who had already retired), while new members of the funds would be exposed to the ups and downs of the free and open market, though they would have more choice about where to save for retirement.

Many economic commentators protested at the time that the bailout was going to cost the nation a fortune - some estimates

PERSONAL FINANCE

TESSAs (tax-exempt special savings accounts) entitle people to save £9,000 over five-year periods in bank deposits. In each case, the dividends, interest and capital gains are tax-free, provided that the funds are left in place for at least five years. One can buy and sell shares within a PEP, but the original funds and the accumulated gains must stay in place for at least five years. Normally, stock-market gains (above an annual exemption) and bank interest are taxed at the taxpayer's marginal rate of tax.

The idea is that people will be encouraged to save for the long-term; they will take responsibility for their own retirement, adopting a longer-term view of their savings, while investing in the UK economy (investment and saving is good for financing the economic base).

The ISA, the individual savings account, is a blend of the two. The problem is that savings in excess of £50,000 will not be transferrable tax-free into ISAs and will amount to double taxation (the income going into PEPs and TESSAs has already been taxed when earned).

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like National Insurance old-age supplements in this country) that their diligence is to be penalized. I have no idea what will happen here in the short term. In the UK, there is already mounting pressure on the government to reconsider, and judging by the outcry, the government might be left with little choice.

In the long term, and, again, this statement should in no way be construed as a political opinion, economic demands that the pension agreement in this country will be restructured. Governments are going to be increasingly torn between finding funds for education, health and retirement benefits. Raising taxes, which is how our welfare state has been funded up till now, is economically unviable in the long term. In my opinion, the overwhelming likelihood is that we will see - and I have no sense for the time frame, given the various entrenched interests at play - privatization of retirement benefits. People will be told: "Here's your employer contribution, here's a tax break or incentive of some sort, decide how much you want to save, how you want to save and whether you want to plan prudently for the long-term future or have a good time now."

Many people moan about how tough life is and how hard it is to make ends meet. Maybe so. But GDP per capita in this country is rising all the time. We have more cars, televisions, VCRs, vacations and *chicims* than ever before.

Don't rely on the government to provide for you. Save more now.

Toyota to invest \$669m. in French auto plant

Toyota Motor Corp., Japan's biggest automaker, ended months of speculation by saying it will invest 4 billion francs (\$668.89 million) to build a second European auto plant in the northern French city of Valenciennes.

The plant, which will create 2,000 jobs in a former coal-mining area with 20 percent unemployment, is thought to be the largest Japanese investment ever in France. Toyota had also considered sites in Poland and the UK.

"Toyota will produce 150,000 small cars in Valenciennes from 2001, with subsequent increases in output and jobs, said Toyota President Hiroshi Okuda at a joint press briefing in Paris with French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin.

The automaker aims to boost its 1% share of the French market, Europe's third largest after Germany and Italy, to 3% early in the next century. It also wants to grab a greater share of other European countries such as Spain and Italy where small cars are in demand.

"They can now enter the French market more aggressively," said Enda Clarke, an auto analyst at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson (Asia) Ltd. "By building vehicles locally, they have a better chance to make headway."

The Toyota investment will provide a boost to local companies such as Valeo SA, a major autoparts maker, and Compagnie de Saint Gobain, one of the world's biggest glass makers.

"At the start, some parts will be imported from Japan, but we aim to cement relations with local suppliers," Okuda said.

It's also a coup for the French government, which is under fire for policies that make it more expensive to invest in France. France plans to raise corporate taxes and cut the working week to 35 hours from 39 for 2000.

Toyota's decision will be a blow for the UK, though, which had hoped to persuade Toyota to locate the facility there, where the company's first European factory is based. Toyota's Okuda said in January that Britain's refusal to adopt the euro - the European Union's single currency - from its 1999 start made the nation a less attractive investment site.

Poland, meanwhile, was disadvantaged by a small internal market, its distance from the main markets of Europe and a shortage of qualified workers, analysts said.

Industrialists say France's good points outweigh high taxes, high salaries and sometimes inflexible labor regulation. "France has lots of things going for it: geography, the size of its market and the strength of the French economy and work force," said Reed Feldman, an American lawyer in Paris who wrote a study for the American Chamber of Commerce in France on barriers to investment there.

Since 1991, only the United States and China have attracted more than the \$120 billion in foreign investment that has gone to France.

Investments in France have been made recently by International Business Machines Corp., Motorola Inc., Federal Express Corp. and Daimler Benz AG's Mercedes-Benz unit. Some companies have never been seen to avoid France altogether. Daewoo Corp. of South Korea, for example, abandoned its plans to open a factory to make cathode-ray tubes in the Lorraine region of eastern France, according to French press reports.

Toyota shares rose 60 yen to 3,720 yen. (Bloomberg Business News)

MUTUAL FUNDS

Table with columns for Fund's name, unit cost, redemption price, monthly yield, and 1997 performance. Includes sections for FLEXIBLE, FOREIGN CURRENCY, COMPANY BONDS, and MIXED.

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Basket at 7-month low vs. shekel

LAST	CHANGE	LAST	CHANGE
Times Mirror	58.25	0.1875	
Timex	31.75	0.0375	
Yorkmark	11.025	0.1125	
Tesco Corp	33.9375	0.125	
Top Oil W. Afr			
Yor R Us	33.125	0.25	
Yorco	114.25	0.75	
Yorco Energy	25.875	1.0525	
Yorco GP	54.375	1.1875	
Yorco Corp	58.6875	0.0625	

By DAN GERSTENFELD and news agencies

The shekel gained 0.25 percent against the dollar yesterday and was fixed at NIS 3.5340 per dollar. Compared to the basket of foreign currencies, the shekel rose 0.26% to 3.7846.

Trading was dull and the basket is now traded at only 0.17% above the lower limit of the trading band. This is its lowest level (relative to the band floor) since the fluctuation range was expanded in mid-June. Dealers said that the Bank of Israel may be forced to intervene soon in foreign currency trading if the dollar continues to rise abroad against the shekel and yen.

CURRENCIES

November, the basket fell 1.5% due to foreign currency supply. Meanwhile, the dollar slipped against the yen as traders wait to see what the Japanese government will propose next week when it unveils a fiscal stimulus package.

The dollar was at 130.07 yen yesterday, down from 130.55 late Monday in London. It was little changed at 1.7872 marks, from 1.7853 late Monday.

STOCKS

UK stocks fell, with the benchmark FTSE 100 Index closing lower for the first time in four trading days, after US shares slipped and a retail report showed British sales growth was lower in November.

The FTSE 100 fell 10.3 points, or 0.20 percent, to 5177.1 after earlier rising to 5200.4. The index has closed lower only twice since the end of November.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES	LAST	CHANGE
S/S (Basket) (1)	3.7846	0
U.S. Dollar (1)	3.5340	0
Swiss Franc (1)	4.6338	0
Deutsche Mark (1)	1.7872	0
French Franc (1)	6.5639	0
Japanese Yen (100)	130.07	0
Svensk Franc (1)	2.427	0
Canadian Dollar (1)	2.488	0
Indian Rupee (100)	2.913	0
Jordanian Dinar (1)	4.5642	0

NEW YORK MARKET INDEXES	LAST	CHANGE
DJ Industrials	8049.86	61.18
DJ Transp.	289.85	-11.50
DJ Util.	299.25	-0.86
DJ Comp.	2031.12	-12.25
DJ Energy	632.87	3.71
DJ Telecom	472.39	-0.83
DJ Health	510.86	-2.58
S&P 500	487.75	-4.74
S&P Spot Index	70.76	-0.59

OTHER MARKET INDEXES	LAST	CHANGE
FTSE 100	5177.1	-10.3
Tel Aviv	1898.5	+55
Singapore	443.83	+1.18
Hong Kong Hang Seng	11490.9	-22.3
Japan Nikkei	248.69	2.18
India S&P	298.24	+0.93
China S&P	4223.35	+32.28
Madrid	695.3	0
Stocks	2963	+12.67
Sydney	2982.8	-2
Milan	984.56	0

DOLLAR CROSS RATES (US)	LAST	CHANGE
Pound spot	1.7872	+0.0005
Mark (DEM)	1.7872	+0.0005
Swiss Franc	1.7872	+0.0005
Japanese Yen	130.07	+0.0005
Svensk Franc	2.427	+0.0005
Canadian Dollar	2.488	+0.0005
Indian Rupee	2.913	+0.0005
Jordanian Dinar	4.5642	+0.0005
Israeli Sheqel	3.5340	+0.0025

US COMMODITIES	LAST	CHANGE
Cocoa (Mar) (CSC)	1618	-11
Coffee (Mar) (CCE)	163.2	-0.8
Wheat (Mar) (CWT)	299.75	-0.25
Soybean (Mar) (CSO)	709.25	-3.5
Sugar (Mar) (CSU)	12.30	-0.06
Orange Juice (Mar) (COC)	85.25	+0.25
Bonds: Treasury	118.02	-0.03
S and P: Markets	980.8	0

LONDON COMMODITIES	LAST	CHANGE
Cocoa (Mar) (LCE)	1618	-11
Coffee (Mar) (LCE)	163.2	-0.8
Wheat (Mar) (LCE)	299.75	-0.25
Best crude oil (Feb) (IPE)	1792	24

SPOT MARKET METALS (US)	LAST	CHANGE
Silver: spot	5.47	-0.07

NEW YORK METAL FUTURES	LAST	CHANGE
Gold (Feb)	294.9	-0.1
Silver (Mar)	5.48	-0.01
Platinum (Mar)	712.75	-0.25
Palladium (Mar)	206.5	0
High-grade copper (Mar)	0.8225	-0.003

LONDON METAL FIXES	LAST	CHANGE
Cold Mill Fe	265	0
Gold PM Fe	263.25	-0.25
Silver Fe	538.8	-4.7
March in platinum: signed contract only, date (Spot market futures are not guaranteed)	2520	0

PARIS	LAST	CHANGE
Azote	1133	-0.4
Air Liquida	340	+0.1
Arcelor	787	+0.1
Elf	7.25	-0.2
Suez	838	+0.4

FRANKFURT	LAST	CHANGE
Affec AG	11.5	0
BASF	65.9	0
Beiersdorf	105.15	-0.35
Deutsche Bank	101.5	0
Dischinger	71.1	0
Hoechst	106.5	0

DATA COMMUNICATIONS VIA ABA

Foreign exchange rates courtesy of **Commstock Trading Ltd.**

34 Saar Yehuda St., Jerusalem

Tel: 02-624-4963, 02-624-4964, 02-624-4965, 02-624-4966, 02-624-4967, 02-624-4968, 02-624-4969, 02-624-4970, 02-624-4971, 02-624-4972, 02-624-4973, 02-624-4974, 02-624-4975, 02-624-4976, 02-624-4977, 02-624-4978, 02-624-4979, 02-624-4980, 02-624-4981, 02-624-4982, 02-624-4983, 02-624-4984, 02-624-4985, 02-624-4986, 02-624-4987, 02-624-4988, 02-624-4989, 02-624-4990, 02-624-4991, 02-624-4992, 02-624-4993, 02-624-4994, 02-624-4995, 02-624-4996, 02-624-4997, 02-624-4998, 02-624-4999, 02-624-5000

Pacific Mediterranean Capital Markets Group

Stock broking
Equity & macro research
Money management
Corporate finance

Tel: 02-624-4963, 02-624-4964, 02-624-4965, 02-624-4966, 02-624-4967, 02-624-4968, 02-624-4969, 02-624-4970, 02-624-4971, 02-624-4972, 02-624-4973, 02-624-4974, 02-624-4975, 02-624-4976, 02-624-4977, 02-624-4978, 02-624-4979, 02-624-4980, 02-624-4981, 02-624-4982, 02-624-4983, 02-624-4984, 02-624-4985, 02-624-4986, 02-624-4987, 02-624-4988, 02-624-4989, 02-624-4990, 02-624-4991, 02-624-4992, 02-624-4993, 02-624-4994, 02-624-4995, 02-624-4996, 02-624-4997, 02-624-4998, 02-624-4999, 02-624-5000

ISRAEL MONEY MARKETS

Patah (foreign currency deposit rates) (7.11.97)

Currency (deposit for)	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS
U.S. dollar (\$250,000)	5.000	5.000	5.250
Pound sterling (£100,000)	5.625	5.750	6.000
German mark (DM 200,000)	2.250	2.275	2.875
Swiss franc (SF 200,000)	0.825	0.825	1.000
Yen (10 million yen)			

(Rates vary higher or lower than indicated according to deposit)

Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (9.12.97)

	CHEQUES AND TRANSFERS		BANKNOTES		Rep. Rates**
	Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell	
Currency basket	3.7540	3.8146			3.7846
U.S. dollar	3.5047	3.5613	3.44	3.62	3.5340
German mark	1.9604	1.9921	1.92	2.02	1.9766
Pound sterling	5.7711	5.8642	5.57	5.95	5.8138
French franc	0.5859	0.5954	0.57	0.61	0.5905
Japanese yen (100)	2.8937	2.7372	2.64	2.78	2.7127
Dutch guilder	1.7410	1.7691	1.71	1.80	1.7538
Swiss franc	2.4094	2.4483	2.36	2.49	2.4270
Swedish krona	0.2491	0.4564	0.44	0.47	0.4526
Norwegian krona	0.4829	0.4923	0.50	0.54	0.5190
Danish krone	0.5149	0.6597	0.63	0.67	0.6513
Finnish mark	0.6492	2.5061	2.42	2.56	2.4892
Canadian dollar	2.4663	2.3809	2.30	2.42	2.3630
Australian dollar	0.7197	0.7314	0.68	0.74	0.7257
S. African rand	0.9505	0.9859	0.93	0.98	0.9577
Austrian schilling (10)	2.7860	2.8310	2.73	2.88	2.8090
Italian lira (1000)	2.0024	2.0347	1.96	2.07	2.0180
Jordanian dinar	4.9328	5.0124	4.87	5.20	5.0006
Egyptian pound	0.9900	1.0800	0.99	1.08	1.0000
ECU	3.8845	3.9472			3.8596
Irish punt	5.0939	5.1792	5.00	5.26	5.1590
Spanish peseta (100)	2.3202	2.3577	2.28	2.40	2.3391

*These rates vary according to bank. **Bank of Israel.

SOURCE: BANK LEUMI

TASE rises on eased Asia concern

Tel Aviv

Israeli stocks closed higher yesterday as investors were reassured about the stability of markets abroad and as they expected that November inflation would be low.

Analysts said that some of the market's increase reflected an easing of investors' concern about the export potential of Israeli high-technology companies in southeast Asia.

The Maof Index of 25 stocks gained 0.95 percent to 302.94. The Mishnain Index increased 0.7% to 291.12. The Tel Aviv Continuous Trading Index stocks moved up 0.46% to 97.55.

"The recovery of markets abroad gives confidence to investors who hesitated to enter the market" in Tel Aviv, said Ilan Doron, head of trading at Solid Financial Markets. Doron also said that he expects November's consumer price index, scheduled to be released next Monday, to rise 0.2%.

Gaining stocks included super-market retailer Supersol Ltd., up 3.8%, holding company Koor Industries Ltd., up 1.8%, and medical scanner maker Elbit Medical, up 5.3%.

"There is a calming of concern regarding activity of high-tech

Europe

UK stocks fell, with the benchmark FTSE 100 Index closing lower for the first time in four trading days, after US shares slipped and a retail report showed British sales growth was lower in November.

The FTSE 100 fell 10.3 points, or 0.20 percent, to 5177.1 after earlier rising to 5200.4. The index has closed lower only twice since the end of November.

Next Plc, the clothing retailer, fell 27 pence, or 3.7%, to 709.

"There's been nervousness about interest rate rises having a [eroding] effect on spending," said Brian Rayner, a retail analyst at Peel Hunt & Co.

The Bank of England has raised interest rates five times this year, a move which dampens consumer demand by raising borrowing costs.

Marks & Spencer Plc, Britain's largest clothing retailer, fell 17p to 624 while Burton Group Plc slid 3p to 143 and Storehouse Plc fell 5p to 342. The British Retail

Asia

Japanese stocks soared on reports that Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto favors spending 10 trillion yen (\$77 billion) in government money to help banks and other financial companies write off bad loans.

This is obviously a shift in government policy toward addressing uneasiness about the financial system," said Yasuhiro Nakazawa, who helps manage 8 trillion yen as a director at Daiwa Investment Trust & Management. "Investors who had been cutting their weighting in financial stocks are reevaluating their strategy" and buying shares again.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 stock average jumped 554.94 points, or 3.4 percent, to 16,686.51. Daiwa Securities Co. was the day's biggest gainer after the company announced it will buy back up to 50 million shares.

The broader Topix average of all shares on the first section of the Tokyo Stock Exchange rose 26.76 points, or 2.2%, to 1,248.07. Gains by major exporters such as Toyota Motor Corp. and Fuji Photo Film Co. helped pull the index higher.

Wall Street

Technology stocks led the market lower yesterday as a weak profit report from a leading software company fanned worries about how well US companies will weather the economic turmoil in Asia.

On Wall Street, the Dow Jones industrial average fell 61.18 points to 5,049.66 despite nearly erasing an 85-point slide in the morning.

Broad-market indicators also pulled back again after a partial midday recovery. The technology-laden Nasdaq composite index suffered the heaviest damage, falling nearly 2 percent as investors chafed at the latest profit report from Oracle.

Oracle's stock price tumbled by nearly a third, setting a one-day volume record with more than 170 million shares traded, after the database software company reported a quarterly profit well below analyst expectations. Oracle attributed the weakness to Asia, and unfavorable exchange rates, warning that those problems may continue for months.

The news weighed heavily on the technology group, whose greater reliance on Asia's economic health has led to repeated selloffs in that sector since late October. (AP)

Gold plummets to a 13-year low

Precious metals

Gold fell to almost a 13-year low in London amid persistent concern more central banks will announce they have sold some of their gold reserves. Last week, Argentina's central bank said it sold 124 metric tons of gold, the equivalent of about 5 percent of annual gold production from mining, investing the proceeds in US Treasury bonds. In July, the Reserve Bank of Australia said it sold about two-thirds of its gold reserves. Spot gold traded \$170 lower at \$285.85 an ounce.

Oil

Brent crude oil futures were little changed as traders await key US supply figures to be issued by the American Petroleum Institute after markets close.

The report helps traders determine if the supply of crude oil and oil products in the world's largest energy consuming nation is sufficient to meet demand.

In the absence of fresh news before the API report, Leslie Nicholas, an analyst with Gerrard and National Intercommodities Ltd. in London said he expected prices to trade between \$17.85 and \$18.36 a barrel, that being the "short-term range established over the past few days."

On London's International Petroleum Exchange January Brent crude futures fell 6 cents to \$18.09 a barrel.

COMMODITIES

Gold \$283.15 +4.4%
Crude Oil \$17.99 +0.16%
CRB 235.64 +0.62%

Others

Coffee rose amid strong demand from European coffee roasters who need to buy beans to prepare for the peak cold weather coffee-drinking season. European coffee

BONDS

US 30-year T-bill yield 6.14 no change

Another private report by LJR Redbook on retail sales, a government release tomorrow, and Friday's producer price index will provide more evidence about the pace of growth and inflation.

"I don't think the market will back up much further, but it's going to take something new to push it back through 6%," said

WHERE TO GO

6310, 08-855-0506.
Rape Crisis Center (24 hours), Tel Aviv 523-4919, 544-9191 (men), Jerusalem 625-5558, Haifa 853-0533, Eilat 633-1977.
Hadassah Medical Organization - (Israel Cancer Association support service, 02-624-7676.
Flight arrivals - for information in English 03-872-3344.

GENERAL ASSISTANCE

EMERGENCY PHARMACIES
Jerusalem: Clal Pharm, 22 Kantiel Nesharim, 641-0485; Balsam, Salah Edin, 627-2015; Shualat, Shualat Road, 581-0108; Dar Aldawa, Herod's Gate, 628-2058.
Tel Aviv: Kupat Holim Clalit, 7-9 Amsterdam, 523-2383; Superpharm, 40 Einstein, 641-3730, Till 1 a.m. Thursday; Jabotinsky, 125 Ibn Gvirol, 545-2040, Till midnight; Superpharm Ramat Aviv, 30 Einstein, 641-3730; London MiniStore Superpharm, 4 Shaal Hamelech, 698-0115.
Ra'anana-Kfar Sava: Edan, 95 Derech Ramatayim, Hod Hasharon, 746-4002.
Netanya: Remez, 13 Remez, 882-3225.
Haifa: Henassi Denya, 99 Abba Khoussi, 834-1113.
Kiryat Arba: Kupat Holim Clalit Zevulun, 192 Derech Akko, Kiryat Beitik, 676-7818.

DUTY HOSPITALS

Jerusalem: Hadassah Ein Kerem (internal, surgery, obstetrics, ophthalmology, ENT); Hadassah Mt. Scopus (orthopedics); Shaare Zedek (pediatrics).
Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Medical Center Dana Pediatric Hospital (pediatrics); Tel Aviv Medical Center (surgery).
Netanya: Laniado.

POLICE

100
PIRE 102
FIRST AID 101
Magen David Adom
In emergencies dial 101 (Hebrew) or 911 (English) in most parts of the country. In addition:
Ashdod 8551533 Kfar Sava 902222
Ashdod 8551232 Netanya 9112233
Beersheva 6274787 Netanya 8904444
Beit Shimon 5221333 Petah Tikva 9311111

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

6310, 08-855-0506.
Rape Crisis Center (24 hours), Tel Aviv 523-4919, 544-9191 (men), Jerusalem 625-5558, Haifa 853-0533, Eilat 633-1977.
Hadassah Medical Organization - (Israel Cancer Association support service, 02-624-7676.
Flight arrivals - for information in English 03-872-3344.

TELEVISION

TEL AVIV Museum.
TEL AVIV MUSEUM. Surrealism. Prints from the Charles and Evelyn Kramer Collection. René Magritte, A Centennial Tribute. Jan Lievens: The Sacrifice of Isaac. British Artists on Paintings and Drawings. Michelangelo - Retrospective. The Helene and Zygryd Wolach Collection of Modern Sculpture. Collections, HELENA RUBINSTEIN PAVILION FOR CONTEMPORARY ART - Surroundings. The Sacrifice of Isaac. British Artists on Personal and Collective Identity. Hours: Weekdays 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Tu. 10 a.m.-10 p.m., Fri. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Meyerhoff Art Education Center, Tel. (03) 691-9155/8.

HAIFA

WHAT'S ON IN HAIFA, dial (04) 832-4253.

A head for soccer, not for business

If Terry Venables is in the Premier League in terms of football management, then he must be approaching non-league status when it comes to business acumen.

What is about Venables? A renowned guru when it comes to shaping soccer sides versed in the latest tactics of today, when it comes to the world of commerce he gives the appearance of moving from one disaster to another.

Rather like the bad driver who says he has never been in a serious accident but has seen hundreds.

Venables seems to walk into football-related business ventures and sooner or later he is forced out or run for cover amid recrimination and regret, not always his own.

Never was this brought into sharper relief than by the events of this week. Depending on whose story you believe, Venables was either sacked or walked away from the chairman's job at First Division Portsmouth. Yet at the same time as this disaster befell him, opportunity knocked with the unlikely chance to take Nigeria to the World Cup finals, having narrowly failed to achieve that feat with the team he was supposed to guide there - Australia.

Given his management record it is a surprise Venables ever needs to get involved in the business side of soccer clubs. Even more so given the bittersweet surrounding his ejection from Tottenham Hotspur by Alan Sugar.

But, like the moth to the flame, Venables was drawn in again when the chance came to revive Pompey's fortunes. At something of a loose end following his untidy exit from the England manager's job at the tail end of Euro 96 - Venables was installed as chairman of Portsmouth, amid hope, expectation and not few promises of bigger and better things to come.

The club was his, said owners the Gregory family, providing he could bring in extra business acumen as a result of joining the club. Given Venables' high profile they thought, the money should soon follow.

Although by way of illustration that he couldn't completely slip the coach's tracksuit, a few months later Venables was signed on a high profile contract by the Australian Football Association to ensure the Socceros made it to France next year for the finals. Naturally, he said he could continue to be Portsmouth chairman at the same time.

With a seemingly Greek sense of tragedy all came crashing down around his ears this past two weeks - both on and off the pitch. First, a late equalizer by Iran dumped the Aussies out of the World Cup, then came the announcement he was leaving Portsmouth. Venables may have protested he was still "weighing up my options," but given the fact the Gregory family claimed they had seized back their shareholding, those options appeared somewhat limited.

Yet there are still those who

covet the man's skills as a coach, among them the Nigerian FA, who have Venables on a three-man shortlist this week to guide their side through the finals. What's more, the Australian FA looked to have sanctioned the move by agreeing to release him, albeit temporarily, from his obligations to them.

If Venables does make it to France in charge of a side it will be fascinating to see how he does, particularly as his potential changes are in the so-called "Group of Death" alongside Spain, Paraguay and Bulgaria.

England fans too, will be interested to see how he fares. While Glenn Hoddle has done a magnificent job guiding the national side to the finals, those with longer memories will recall that Venables took over amid the debris of the Graham Taylor era and shaped a side which gave Germany a run for their money in Euro 96.

As the draw stands, England and Nigeria cannot meet until the semi-finals - an unlikely prospect, but a delicious one to savor nonetheless.

Even if events do pan out as mooted, one still has the suspicion that Venables' more permanent employment will find him at the helm of a Premiership club before too long.

He even spoke cryptically of winning a championship being in danger of becoming an obsession. There are a host of top clubs who would be only too happy to give Venables the keys to the boot room, providing he stays well clear of the boardroom.

The most famous boot room of them all - at Anfield, home of Liverpool - would seem an ideal next step for the management maverick.

England's draw not golden Talking of the World Cup draw this week, those who applauded England's group as "relatively easy" may be guilty of not looking beyond the first round.

Sure, a group containing Romania, probably weakest of the top seeds, Colombia and Tunisia is, on paper, easier than some of the others.

But look beyond the first round shenanigans, which essentially are to clear the minefields out of the pool and give FIFA the chance to trumpet about the ever-expanding contest, and the picture is not so clear.

Call the second round the first round proper, and England, if they win their group or are runners-up, are likely to face either Argentina or Croatia. Having overcome that hurdle, they then could be facing either Germany or Holland. And that's before they even reach the semi-finals!

England probably have their best chance of winning the World Cup since 1970, and they will have to overcome some big teams to do it, but this draw does have a sting in the tail and if come July 12 they are lining up in the final against Brazil, then many tough games will be behind them already.

Stockton returns in Jazz victory

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Eight weeks to the day after having surgery on his left knee, All-Star guard John Stockton made a triumphant return to the Utah Jazz lineup Monday night. He scored 10 points, including eight in the first 5:37, and came off the bench late to spark the Jazz to a 106-97 win over the visiting Indiana Pacers.

Stockton received a deafening standing ovation from the Delta Center crowd before the game. Sporting a light brace on his left knee, he converted a three-point play on Utah's first possession.

He proceeded to get eight points and two assists in the game's first 5:37, when he left to another standing ovation.

Coach Jerry Sloan sat Stockton down for the rest of the first half. "That's how much I felt comfortable playing him," Sloan said. "Any time you come back from an injury, you've got to be careful."

"Don't expect too much too soon," warned Karl Malone, who led the Jazz with 31 points. "I think you get what you expected when he was in, though."

Although he played just 20 minutes, his presence boosted the Jazz after the Pacers tied the game midway through the fourth quarter.

Stockton also showed a feisty side in an altercation with the Pacers' Dale Davis midway through the third quarter. The two scuffled after Stockton was knocked to the ground while trying to set a pick on Davis.

In the game's final minutes, Stockton ran the show as the Jazz controlled the ball for 79 straight seconds with two offensive rebounds and a flagrant foul on Davis. Stockton finished with seven assists.

His return from an operation to remove loose cartilage came faster than expected. Sloan said Stockton's rehabilitation, which was to take eight to 12 weeks, was essentially complete.

"He's ready to get some game action," Sloan said before the game. "He's at a point where he can help this team on the floor again."

Sloan said Stockton will probably "play the same minutes he normally plays, although we'll probably argue about it."

Stockton has averaged 15.5 minutes a game during his 13-year career.

The Jazz went 11-7 during Stockton's absence to stay near the top of the Midwest Division. But the team's play hasn't been at the level of last season, when the Jazz were 16-2 at this point and went on to appear in their first finals.

Howard Easley has averaged 10.8 points and a team-leading 5.8 assists a game while playing nearly 30 minutes a game in Stockton's absence. He is also second in the league in 3-point accuracy, making 16 of 31 3-pointers (.516).

To make room for Stockton, the Jazz will place rookie point guard Troy Hudson (sprained wrist) on the injured list. Hudson has played only mop-up minutes in eight games this season.

"It's going to be good to have him back," Easley said. "I'm sure it won't take him long to get back to his old self."

Rookie point guard Jacque Vaughn, averaging 4.8 points and



HE'S BACK - All-time NBA assists and steals leader John Stockton returns to action for the first time this season on Monday. The Jazz defeated the Pacers 106-97.

3.6 assists a game while playing more than 17 minutes a game in Stockton's absence, also will see his minutes curtailed. But Sloan said he intends to play "all three point guards."

"The Jazz said Stockton, who rejoined practice two weeks ago, was intent on returning to the lineup as quickly as possible.

"He's worked harder than anybody I've ever seen," Easley said. "I thought that's what you were paid to do," Sloan said. "If you work at it, you always have a good chance to come back [early]."

Stockton had missed only four games in 13 seasons before his knee operation. The injury ended his streak of 609 consecutive regular-season games.

Last year, Stockton hit a 3-point shot at the buzzer against the Houston Rockets to send the Jazz to the NBA Finals. They lost in six games to the Chicago Bulls.

Stockton is the NBA's career leader in assists (12,170) and steals (2,531). A member of the NBA's 50th Anniversary All-Time Team and a two-time Olympian, Stockton is a nine-time All-Star.

Heat 105, Nets 97

Tim Hardaway scored 23 points and Mike Miller took advantage of a fast start to beat the Heat.

Hardaway sank a pair of 3-pointers to help Miami build a 20-3 lead. The Nets scored just one basket in the opening 7 1/2 minutes and missed 10 of their first 11 shots. The Nets closed to 95-89 with 1:31 left, but Eric Murdock hit eight straight free throws to ensure the Heat's third consecutive victory.

Miami improved to 10-2 at home. The Atlantic Division leaders play 15 of their next 20 games on the road.

New Jersey's Keith Van Horn, the second pick in this year's draft, scored 16 points in his second NBA game. Van Horn, who missed the first 17 games with a sprained right ankle, played 39 minutes and hit seven of 14 shots, including a buzzer-beater at the end of the first half.

Royce Selby scored 24 points as host Orlando, playing without star Penny Hardaway, defeated the Philadelphia 76ers.

Hardaway, who missed his third straight game because of pain in his left knee, was placed on the injured list before the game. Orlando also lost Nick Anderson, who broke a bone in his right hand in the first half and is expected to miss at least four weeks.

But the Magic still had enough to beat the Sixers, who got 21 points from Allen Iverson and 18 from Jimmy Jackson.

Trail Blazers 105, Lakers 99 Isaiah Rider scored 21 of his 26 points in the second half as host Portland handed the Los Angeles Lakers their second straight loss.

It is the first time this season that Los Angeles has lost two in a row. The Lakers, who lost at home to Cleveland 94-84 Sunday night, are 15-4 overall but only 5-4 since Shaquille O'Neal went down with an abdominal injury.

The Lakers, who trailed the entire fourth quarter, cut Portland's lead to 101-99 on Kobe Bryant's two free throws with 12.4 seconds to play.

But Rick Brunson, signed last week out of the Continental Basketball Association, sank four

consecutive free throws to clinch the win.

Portland's Rasheed Wallace had 18 points, nine rebounds and five assists, all tying his season highs.

Nick Van Exel had 24 points and 12 assists for the Lakers, who lost to a Western Conference team for the first time in 13 games this season. Elden Campbell added 17 points, 12 rebounds and seven blocks for Los Angeles.

PHILADELPHIA 98, MIAMI 97. PHILADELPHIA 98, MIAMI 97. PHILADELPHIA 98, MIAMI 97. PHILADELPHIA 98, MIAMI 97. PHILADELPHIA 98, MIAMI 97.

MIAMI 105, NEW JERSEY 97. MIAMI 105, NEW JERSEY 97. MIAMI 105, NEW JERSEY 97. MIAMI 105, NEW JERSEY 97. MIAMI 105, NEW JERSEY 97.

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EASTERN CONFERENCE

Table with columns: Team, W, L, Pct., GB. Rows include Miami, Orlando, New Jersey, Washington, Boston, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Cleveland, Chicago, Indiana, Charlotte, Milwaukee, Detroit, Toronto.

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Table with columns: Team, W, L, Pct., GB. Rows include Houston, Utah, San Antonio, Minnesota, Vancouver, Dallas, Denver, LA Lakers, Seattle, Phoenix, Portland, Sacramento, LA Clippers, Golden State.

Panthers defeat Cowboys 23-13

IRVING, Texas (AP) — The Carolina Panthers unceremoniously ended the Dallas Cowboys' five-year reign as National Football Conference-East champion.

Kerry Collins threw two touchdown passes, and Fred Lane rushed for 138 yards Monday night as the Panthers stayed alive in the NFC wild-card race and all but eliminated the Cowboys with a 23-13 victory.

Carolina evened its record at 7-7, while Dallas dropped to 6-8. With two games left, the Cowboys have only an outside chance of making the playoffs for a seventh consecutive year.

The New York Giants have an 8-5 record in the NFC East, and Dallas can't catch them. The Panthers have ended the Cowboys' hopes twice in the last year. Carolina knocked Dallas out of the NFL title contention with a 26-17 victory on January 5 in the NFC divisional playoffs.

Collins, who suffered a concussion last week, hit key passes while Lane kept Dallas off balance with his hard runs despite the presence of tackle Leon Lett, who made some spectacular plays in his first game back after a one-year suspension for violating the NFL's substance abuse policy.

Collins, who threw a 15-yard touchdown pass to Rae Carruth in the second quarter, guided Carolina on a 69-yard drive to open the second half. That put the Panthers ahead 17-6.

He completed passes of 13 yards to Anthony Johnson, 18 yards to Mubins Muhammad, and finally found Scott Greene on a 1-yard touchdown pass.

John Kasay then hit a 40-yard field goal to start the fourth quarter, making it 20-6. He also had an 18-yarder with 53 seconds left to finish off the Cowboys. Troy Aikman hit Michael Irvin with a 52-yard touchdown to put Dallas within seven points with 6:33 left.

However, with a four-and-one on the Carolina 45, Aikman was trapped for a 25-yard loss by safety Chad Cota with 3:27 left.

The Panthers dominated the first half to take a 10-6 lead over the Cowboys, who lost running back Emmitt Smith after he re-injured his left shoulder trying to make a block.

Tight end Eric Bjornson also fractured his left shin. Collins, who fractured a jaw in the preseason and suffered a concussion last week, hit Carruth for the touchdown after Kasay had kicked a 34-yard field goal.

It was the first time Dallas coach Barry Switzer had ever been part of a three-game losing streak in college or the pros, a span of 259. Dallas hadn't lost three games in a row since 1990.

Carolina 23-13. Dallas 6-8. First Quarter: Car—FG Kasay 34, 46S. Second Quarter: Car—Carruth 15 pass from Collins (Kasay kick), 42S. Del—FG Cunningham 43, 22T. Del—FG Cunningham 32, 23T. Third Quarter: Car—Greene 2 pass from Collins (Kasay kick), 63S. Fourth Quarter: Car—FG Kasay 40, 30T. Del—FG Cota 25 pass from Aikman (Cunningham kick), 62S. Car—FG Kasay 18, 25T.

RECEIVING—Carolina, Lane 34-138, Johnson 13-138, Muhammad 1-13, Greene 1-1. Dallas, Lett 1-13, Johnson 1-13, Muhammad 1-13, Greene 1-1. MISSED FIELD GOALS—None.

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

Table with columns: Team, W, L, T, Pct., PF, PA. Rows include New England, Miami, NY Jets, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Jacksonville, Tennessee, Baltimore, Cleveland, West, Kansas City, Denver, Seattle, Oakland, San Diego.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Table with columns: Team, W, L, T, Pct., PF, PA. Rows include NY Giants, Washington, Philadelphia, Dallas, Arizona, Central, Green Bay, Tampa Bay, Minnesota, Detroit, Chicago, West, St. Louis Rams, Carolina, Atlanta, New Orleans, St. Louis.

Saturday, Dec. 13: Washington at New York Giants, Pittsburgh at New England. Sunday, Dec. 14: Dallas at Cincinnati, Detroit at Minnesota, Tennessee at Baltimore, Jacksonville at Buffalo, Miami at Indianapolis, Philadelphia at Atlanta, Tampa Bay at New York Jets, Arizona at New Orleans, Green Bay at Carolina, Kansas City at San Diego, Seattle at Oakland, Chicago at St. Louis. Monday, Dec. 15: Denver at San Francisco.

Toronto snaps Dallas winning streak

Gretzky injured in Rangers win; Blues rude to visiting coach

TORONTO (AP) — Mats Sundin scored twice and Felix Potvin stopped 19 shots Monday night as the Toronto Maple Leafs snapped Dallas' seven-game winning streak with a 3-0 victory over the Stars.

Sundin scored his 10th and 11th goals and Potvin recorded his first shutout this season as the Leafs, the Central Division's last-place team, blanked the NHL's top-scoring squad.

The Stars managed just four shots in the third period and slipped to 1-1 since leading scorer Mike Modano went down with torn ligaments in his right knee last week.

Igor Korolev opened the scoring for Toronto when he converted a behind-the-net pass from Sundin at 14:04 of the first period.

Sundin made it 2-0 at 1:27 of the third period when he broke down the left wing, went around defenseman Richard Marvichuk and shelved a backhand past goalie Ed Belfour.

Sundin added an empty-netter at 18:49.

Rangers 3, Coyotes 1

The Rangers got the early jump at home for a change and held on to break an eight-game winless streak in a game marred by an injury to superstar Wayne Gretzky.

remaining, leaving the Rangers to wrap up their first victory since a 4-3 win over Carolina on Nov. 21.

The injury was not believed to be serious, according to the Rangers.

The Rangers were 0-4-4 since, including two ties in the last two games. The Coyotes' winless streak, meanwhile, was extended to four (0-3-1).

Mike Richter played one of his strongest games of the season for the Rangers, making 27 saves.

For only the second time in 17 home games this season, the Rangers scored first as Adam Graves cashed in on a power play.

Canadiens 4, Avalanche 2. Andy Moog stopped 23 shots and won for the first time since November 8 as Montreal defeated Patrick Roy and visiting Colorado.

Benoit Brunet, Marc Bureau, Stephane Quintal and Mark Recchi scored for the Canadiens. Joe Sakic and Jon Kilmom scored for Colorado, which had its six-game unbeaten streak ended.

Roy, traded from the Canadiens to the Avalanche two years ago, made 24 saves.

Blues 5, Canucks 1. The St. Louis Blues got back at their old boss.

In St. Louis, checking line winger Scott Pellerin scored 20 goals as the Blues made Mike

Keenan's first visit to town since being fired a year ago a miserable experience.

Star right wing Brett Hull sat out the game against his former tormentor with a pulled hamstring and the Blues' No. 2 scorer, Pavol Demitra, left in the first period with a bruised tailbone. Their firepower wasn't needed as the Blues won their fourth in a row.

The Canucks got off to a fast start under Keenan and are 5-4-2 overall under Iron Mike, but have lost three in a row.

A near-sellout crowd of 19,295 enjoyed every minute, bouting Keenan's picture all nine times it appeared on the Jumbotron scoreboard and cheering wildly whenever the camera focused on Blues coach Joel Quenneville.

Colorado 10-1-2. Montreal 8-2-2. First Period: Colorado, Sundin 16 (Goalkeeper 1:28, Second Period: Montreal, Bureau 4 (Potvin, Sundin), 7:28, 3. Montreal, Sundin 14 (Potvin, Sundin), 11:52. Third Period: Colorado, Sundin 14 (Potvin, Sundin), 16:20, 4. Colorado, Sundin 4 (Sakic), 17:52. Goals—Colorado, Roy 7-6 (25-29, A-21, 27).

Philadelphia 8-0-1. NY Rangers 11-8-1. First Period: New York, Graves 7 (Lesh, Sundin), 3:31. Second Period: None. Third Period: New York, Sundin 1 (Sundin), 11:52. Goals—New York, Sundin 1 (Sundin), 11:52. Goals—Colorado, Roy 7-6 (25-29, A-21, 27).

Philadelphia 8-0-1. NY Rangers 11-8-1. First Period: New York, Graves 7 (Lesh, Sundin), 3:31. Second Period: None. Third Period: New York, Sundin 1 (Sundin), 11:52. Goals—New York, Sundin 1 (Sundin), 11:52. Goals—Colorado, Roy 7-6 (25-29, A-21, 27).

Dallas 20-8-4. St. Louis 18-9-6. Detroit 18-7-5. Phoenix 13-14-9. Chicago 10-14-5. Tampa Bay 11-14-24. Pacific Division: Colorado 16-7-4. Los Angeles 12-12-5. Anaheim 11-14-6. Edmonton 9-15-7.

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Inside

Stockton returns in triumph

Page 18

European Cup preview

Page 17

Sports Editors
Joe Hoffman & Ori Lewis

Eilat falls to Stefanel Milano

By ELI GRONER

Stefanel Milano virtually assured itself of the top basketball spot in its EuroCup division after defeating a lackluster Hapoel Eilat last night, 86-75.

The southerners now need a victory over the Yugoslavian Beobanka club next week (or a one-point loss) to assure a second place finish.

The Italians used a classic inside-outside combination en route to the victory. Thurl Bailey (20 points) and Warren Kidd (18) established early supremacy in the paint, scoring at ease over the overmatched Eddie Elisma and Joe Dawson.

When Eilat coach Moshe Weinkrantz deployed a two-three zone defense in an attempt to contain the inside damage, Phelio Portaluppi, Nanao Gentile and George Sigalis rained in three-point shots seemingly at will. The Italians did an exceptional job of shadowing Amir Katz as well, limiting Eilat's sharpshooter to a mere eight points.

Derrick Hamilton is considered Eilat's barometer regarding the club's play, and last night was no exception. Hamilton turned in one of the most unproductive 22-point performances in memory, shooting extremely poorly for most of the game and collecting most of his points at garbage time. Meir Tapiro added 18 points in defeat.

Mac Ra'anana 89, Sartov 79 Ra'anana moved into sole possession of third with a home victory.

The win guarantees the club's advancement to the round of 32. Mark Brisker led the victors with 26 points while Tomer Steinhauer added 23.

Also, Maccabi Tel Aviv's Oded Katash was the lone Israeli named to the eastern squad for the European All-Star game on December 30 in Tel Aviv. Joining him is teammate Rashard Griffith.

Aston Villa, Inter advance to quarters

BIRMINGHAM - Savo Milosevic scored the decisive goal in the 71st minute as Aston Villa beat Steaua Bucharest 2-0 yesterday and advanced to the UEFA Cup quarterfinals for the first time in 20 years.

Steaua won the first leg 2-1 two weeks ago in Romania, but Aston Villa advanced on a 3-2 aggregate.

Milosevic scored just a minute after teammate Stan Collymore had missed when his close-in shot hit the post.

The key strike came as Milosevic settled the ball with his left foot and then drove home a shot with the other foot from 12 meters behind Bucharest goalkeeper Zoltan Riti.

Ian Taylor scored the second goal in the 86th as he broke in alone, taking advantage as the Romanians were pushing forward. Aston Villa had the better scoring chances in the first half, although neither team looked ready to score.

The best chance for the Romanians came in the 48th when Damian Militaru forced Aston Villa goalkeeper Mark Bosnich to make a diving save.

Taylor had Villa's best scoring shot of the first 55 minutes when his header in the 54th was stopped on the line by Riti.

Taylor had another chance three minutes later and shot high.

Aston Villa's Dwight Yorke, who scored Villa's only goal in the first leg, missed the game with a foot injury.

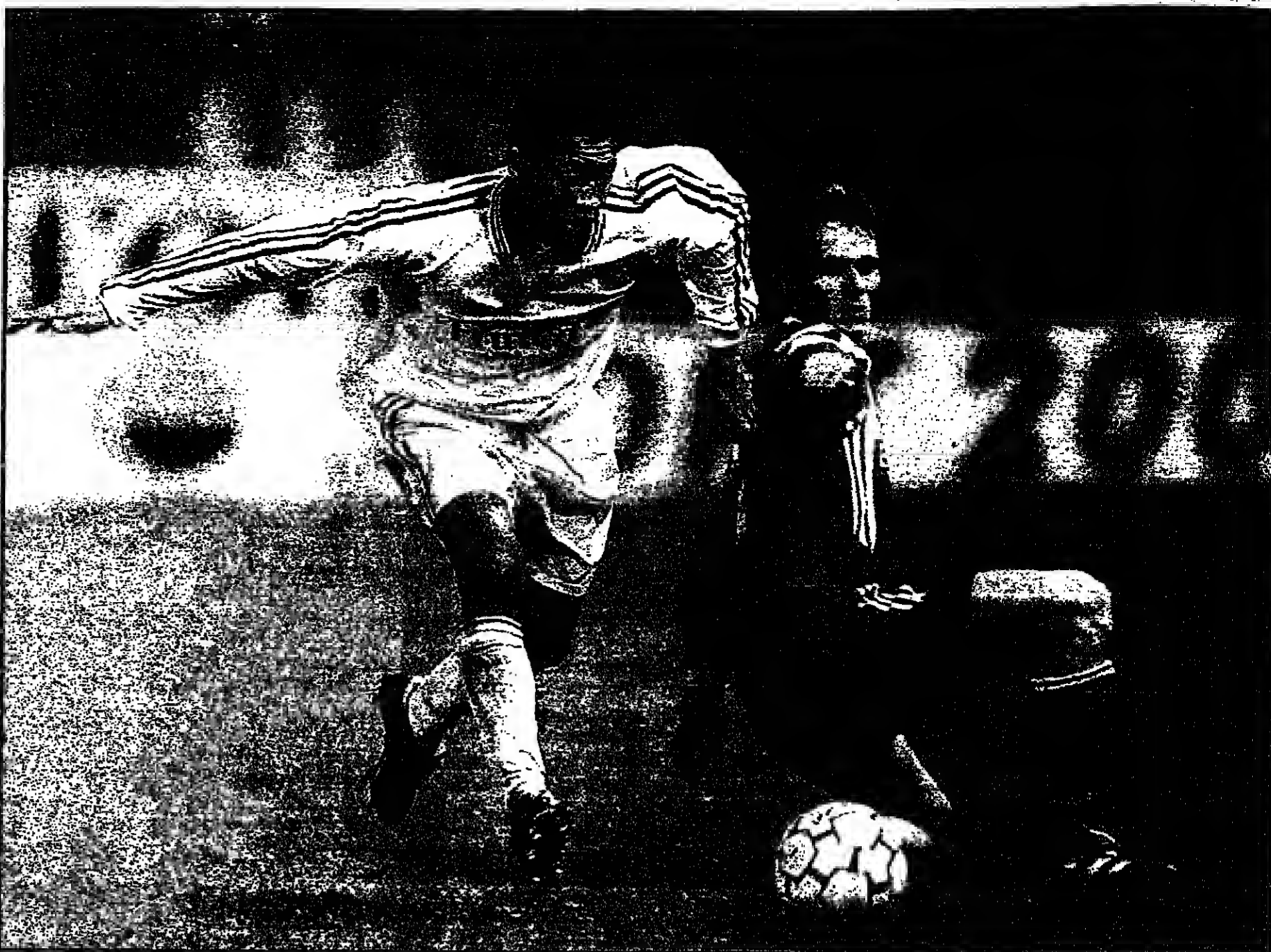
Inter Milan 3, Strasbourg 0 Inter Milan's relentless attacking overturned a two-goal deficit from the away leg and put the host Italians into the quarterfinals.

Brazilian star Ronaldo redeemed himself after missing an early penalty kick by netting Inter's opening goal, Argentine midfielder Javier Zanetti evened the aggregate in the 49th and another Argentine, Diego Simeone, scored the key third for the hosts with 17 minutes remaining.

The loss ended the dream run of Strasbourg, which shocked Glasgow Rangers and Liverpool in the cup's opening rounds and defeated Inter 2-0 in their third round, first leg match two weeks ago.

Inter Milan, the 1991 and 1994 UEFA Cup champion and last season's runner-up, has lost Serie A all season and is atop the standings with an 8-3-0 record.

Strasbourg, by contrast, is 14th



GRABBING RIGHTS - Frank Rabarivony (l) of Auxerre fights for the ball with Niels Oude Kamphuis of Dutch team Twente Enschede last night. Auxerre won 2-0 to advance 3-0 on aggregate.

in the 18-team French League with a 4-6-9 mark.

Spartak Moscow 1 Karlsruhe 0

Spartak Moscow needed a goal from Alexander Shirko in the final period of extra time to overcome Karlsruhe SC 1-0 on aggregate.

With penalties looming in the second leg after no score in 199

minutes of soccer, Andrei Tikhonov surged down the left and found Shirko unmarked with a cross that the striker gratefully hammered home.

Despite underoil heating at Moscow's Dynamo stadium and sand spread on the almost totally bare surface, both teams struggled to find their feet and break the

deadlock in temperatures of -8° C.

Auxerre 2, Twente Enschede 0 Host Auxerre scored through winger Steve Marlet in the third minute to strengthen their 1-0 victory in the first leg.

Lazio 1, Rapid Vienna 0 A sweetly-worked goal from Giorgio Venturini sealed the Rome side's place in the quarter-finals of

the UEFA Cup.

Venturini drove home his first goal of the season four minutes from time after Pierluigi Casiraghi had set him up with an acrobatic back-heal on the edge of the penalty-area.

The third-round second-leg win gave Lazio a 3-0 aggregate victory.

UEFA Cup third round, second leg matches yesterday:

In Gelsenkirchen: Schalke 04 (Germany) 2, Braga (Portugal) 0. Scorers: Martin Max 45, Rene Eijkelkamp 63. Red card: Jose Nuno (Braga) 39. Halftime: 1-0; Attendance: 56,000. Schalke win 2-0 on aggregate. (AP, Reuters)

Boggs signs with Devil Rays, Lofton returns to Tribe

ST. PETERSBURG (AP) - The Tampa Bay Devil Rays snared another free agent, signing third baseman Wade Boggs, who needs 200 hits to reach 3,000 for his career.

The new American League team signed a deal with the 16-year veteran and native of Tampa who spent the past five seasons with the New York Yankees.

The five-time AL batting champion, who owns a .331 lifetime average, hit .292 last season, finishing below .302 for only the second time in his career. He added four homers and 28 RBIs in 353 at bats last season.

Boggs, 39, is the fourth free agent signed by the Devil Rays in the past six days. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Despite his age, Boggs is projected as a starter for Tampa Bay, which plans to use him in the infield with first baseman Fred McGriff, second baseman Miguel Cairo and shortstop Kevin Stocker.

Boggs appeared in 103 games for the Yankees in 1997 and had 23 doubles and one triple among his 103 hits. He has an even 2800 hits during a career that began with the Boston Red Sox in 1982. Also yesterday, the Boston Red

Sox have signed relief pitcher Dennis Eckersley to a one-year contract.

The deal brings the 43-year-old right-hander back to Boston, where he was a starter from 1978-84 until he was traded to the Cubs for Bill Buckner.

After going 6-11 with the Cubs in 1986, Eckersley was traded to the Oakland Athletics. They turned him into a reliever and gave him a second career.

From 1988-1993, he averaged 43 saves per season. In 1990, he had 48 saves and a 0.63 ERA for one of three Athletics World Series teams he played on. Last

year, a panel of baseball writers named him the best relief pitcher in baseball history.

In all, Eckersley has 389 saves — second to Lee Smith's 478.

In other moves, Kenny Lofton returned to the Cleveland Indians on Monday and Jose Vizcaino signed with the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Lofton got the biggest deal, a \$24 million, three-year contract from the Indians. Cleveland had traded the outfielder to Atlanta on March 25 for David Justice and Marquis Grissom.

To make room, the Indians dealt Grissom to the Milwaukee

Brewers on Monday for pitchers Ben McDonald, Mike Fetters and Ron Villone, then traded Fetters to Oakland for pitcher Steve Karsay.

Also, Cleveland agreed to a two-year contract with pitcher Dwight Gooden worth \$5,675,000.

In other signings: — Los Angeles agreed to a \$9.5m, three-year deal with former Dodger Vizcaino, a shortstop who .266 in a career-high 151 games for San Francisco last season.

— Toronto signed 34-year-old catcher Mike Stanley to a \$6.15m, two-year contract and 35-year-old second baseman Tony Fernandez to a one-year deal that guarantees him \$2.5m.

— Tampa Bay signed designated hitter Paul Sorrento, who hit .269 with a career-high 31 homers for the Seattle Mariners last season, to a two-year deal that guarantees him \$5.25m.

— Texas agreed to a \$1.65m, one-year deal with shortstop Kevin Elster, who had 99 RBIs for the Rangers in 1996 and then signed with Pittsburgh.

Ten players agreed to contracts with their former teams just before

the midnight deadline.

Umpires ordered to use stopwatches

In their battle with television, umpires found out baseball is a game with time limits.

Baseball umpires have been ordered by an arbitrator to use stopwatches between innings to ensure that pitches aren't thrown before television is back on the air from commercial breaks.

Umpires balked last spring at using the stopwatches to make sure that breaks were 2 minutes, 25 seconds during US-wide televised Saturday afternoon and Sunday night games and 2:05 for other regular-season games.

The American and National leagues filed a grievance and, for once, baseball owners won.

"This is a powerful wakeup call that the umpires work for the leagues and should comply to appropriate direction," said Robert Kneel, the lawyer who represents the leagues in the dealings with umpires.

The umpires argued that timing the breaks was not covered by their collective bargaining agreement.

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Still pugnacious after all these years

NEW YORK - The former New York Yankees pitcher, who has been a major league pitcher for 20 years, is still as pugnacious as ever. In 1994, he was named the most pugnacious player in the league.

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Handwritten signature: יואל, מיליט